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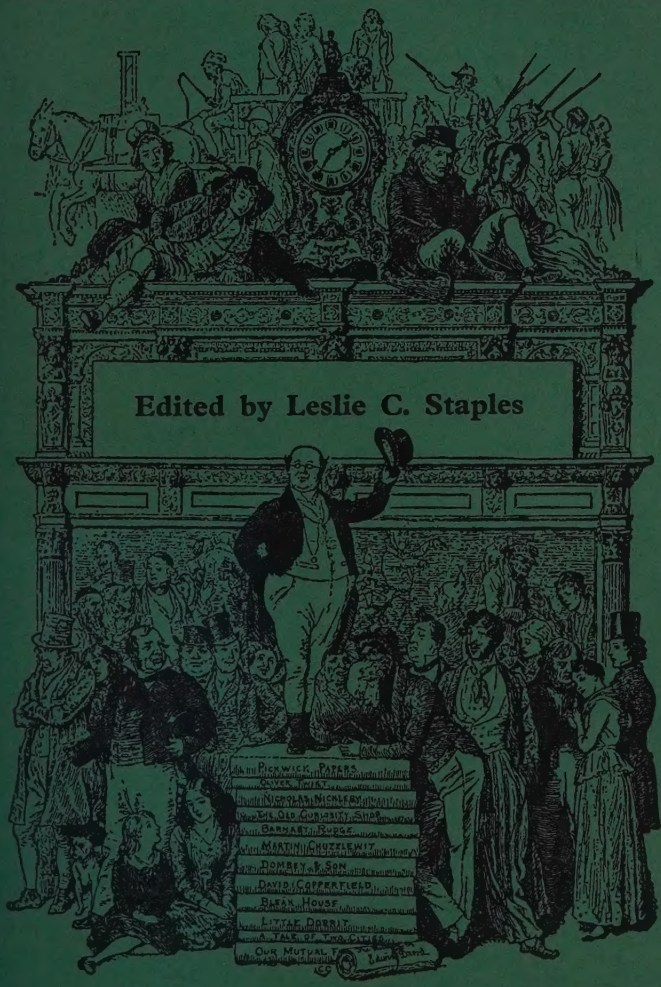

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WANTED

Charles Dickens as Legal Historian, by W. S. Holdsworth, Yale Univ. Press, 1925.

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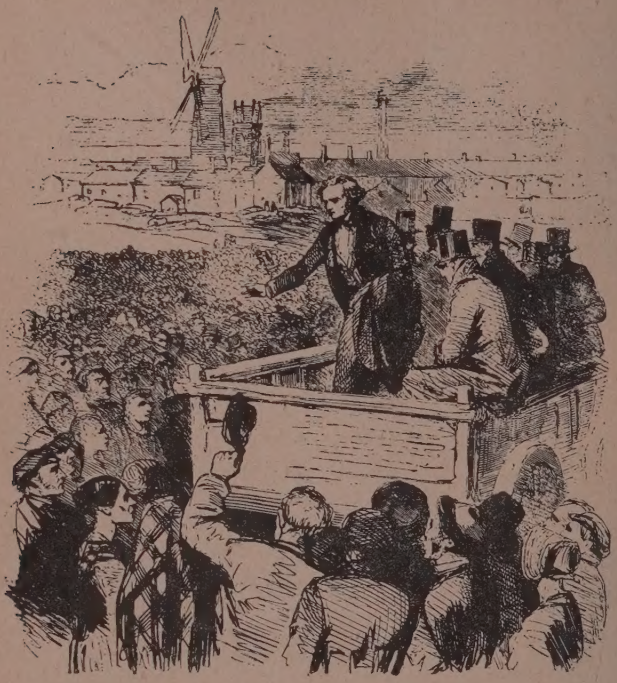

George Cowell and the strike leaders addressing a meeting in "The Orchard," Preston.

Illustrated London News, Nov. 12th, 1853.

see "The Battle for Preston," p. 159.

THE DICKENSIAN

AUTUMN NUMBER

Completing the 50th Volume

VOL. L. SEPTEMBER 1954 No. 312

WHEN FOUND—

Jubilee With this number, *The Dickensian* makes literary history. It completes fifty years of continuous publication: a record we believe to be unequalled by any journal in the world that is devoted solely to the life and writings of one man. A Jubilee Number will appear in December, shortly before the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of the first number in January, 1905. On Friday evening, January 7th, a special meeting will be held in The Old Hall of Lincoln's Inn, of which details will be announced later, to commemorate the event. Members of branches will be especially welcome.

* * * * *

Mr. John Greaves The recitals given by our Hon. Secretary, Mr. John Greaves, are by this time thoroughly appreciated throughout the length and breadth of the country. He is in great demand among the Branches of the Fellowship and his visits are limited only by the time that he is able to devote to them. This year he has added another exceptionally fine recital to his repertory, one dealing with *Oliver Twist.* Those familiar with his rendering of *A Christmas Carol* will find it difficult to believe that the new recital is even finer, yet so it seems to us. Enquiry has elicited the astonishing facts that Mr. Greaves has found the time, in spite of a very full business life, to give recitals to all but five branches of the Fellowship in this country during the last few years, and that one or more of those is likely to hear him next winter. An ambassador indeed!

* * * * *

Dickens House It is pleasant to be told one is right, or has acted rightly. The Dickens Fellowship took steps to preserve 48 Doughty Street as early as 1923, and completed its endowment in 1952. Now, on June 10th, 1954, the government has decided that the house is of "historic interest," and has scheduled it to that effect under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947.

* * * * *

Charlie Chaplin At the Dinner to be held by the Dickens Fellowship on February 7th, 1955, in celebration of the 143rd Anniversary of the Birth of Dickens, the toast to "The Immortal Memory of Charles Dickens" will be proposed by Mr. Charles Chaplin.

Golden Wedding Hearty congratulations to our Life President, Mr. Henry Charles Dickens, and Mrs. Dickens, upon the occasion of their Golden Wedding on September 28th.

* * * * *

Bransby Williams The legions of his friends and admirers will welcome the news that veteran Alexander, Bransby Williams, who has been conquering the new world of Television, has written a second book of reminiscences after an interval of forty-five years. A review will appear in our next issue.

* * * * *

Emlyn Williams Mr. Emlyn Williams has been delighting large audiences in the North and in Wales with his third selections of " Reading from Dickens." He is now repeating it throughout a lengthy tour of South Africa, but has promised us that London will hear the new programme next year.

PERSONAL

IT is with a full heart that I set myself to thank my many friends, the world over, for the magnificent presentation initiated, all unknown to me, by my friend and colleague, John Greaves.

I thank him for the affectionate terms in which he commended to you my record of service to the Fellowship, on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of *The Dickensian*, and on my completion of forty years of membership of the Fellowship, and I offer my heartfelt thanks to all those who so generously contributed.

The gifts with which I was presented at the Portsmouth Conference (as reported on another page) expressing your esteem for myself and your appreciation of my work, although far more valuable than the circumstances merit, delight me beyond all bounds. The magnificent figure of David Garrick as Richard III, a rare piece of English porcelain which I have long coveted, and the beautiful collection of antique table-silver, another desire of many years, will give me pleasure as long as I live, and the former will, afterwards I hope, grace one of the great national collections of porcelain. That your good will toward me should take the form of objects so infinitely acceptable to me, I owe, I suspect, to our Assistant Secretary, Miss D. L. Minards, who knew exactly what would best please me. She, too, has my grateful thanks. The balance resulting from your generosity will, I further hope, purchase sooner or later, some especially interesting memento of Charles Dickens which will eventually find a permanent home at the Dickens House.

But beyond the beauty and the value of these gifts is the abiding thought of all you meant to convey to me of your regard for me and my work. It was that which overwhelmed me on that never-to-be-forgotten morning at Portsmouth, the remembrance of which will never cease to move me whenever it comes into my mind, as it will every time my eyes light upon your gifts.

In deepest gratitude,

LESLIE C. STAPLES.

THE PARADOX OF DICKENS

ADDRESS BY PROFESSOR EDGAR JOHNSON
TO THE BOSTON BRANCH OF THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP.

142ND BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY DINNER, FEBRUARY 10TH, 1954

IN describing my subject as the *Paradox of Dickens*, I am guilty of slight distortion and it might have been more accurate if I had said the *Paradoxes of Dickens*. I was afraid, however, that such an expression would have been misleading, that it might have suggested that I meant paradoxes in Dickens's writings in the way in which one speaks, for example, of the paradoxes of G. K. Chesterton. There is nothing of the kind, of course, in Dickens ; there is no element of the startling or the strange or the surprising in Dickens's writings, so far as its content is concerned. Aside from its enormous vividness and gusto, its inordinate energy and a certain wild burlesque occasionally in the handling, that makes one half Dickens's characters seem like fantastic caricatures (although always, I insist, true caricatures of essential qualities in human nature itself), under the mask of a roaring hilarious exaggeration though or, sometimes, with a furious and humorous indignation that is no less violent, what Dickens perceives in the world and has to say about it is, usually, the simplest commonsense. To take just one not very important illustration of it as an example, Dickens insists that temperance does not, on the one hand, mean drunkenness of course, but neither, on the other hand, does it mean teetotalism; and you will all recall the passage in *Pickwick Papers* where Dickens heaps derision on the red-nosed teetotaller, Stiggins, who sneaks secret potations of pineapple-rum on the side, when he isn't haranguing his audience. Temperance then, for Dickens, means balance and control. It must be admitted to be sure, that never did anyone support temperance with a more splendid intoxication of manner, but temperance nevertheless represents Dickens's ideal and so it is in everything Dickens has to say. It is with a fury of glorious violence that Dickens supports the golden mean. What I mean then by speaking of the paradox of Dickens, is that it is in Dickens himself, Dickens in his character, his personality, the whole quality of the man, his character and career, the very essence of Dickens, that is a paradox.

To begin with there is the paradox of who Dickens is, or perhaps one might say, how many different men he is. Is he the brilliant popular novelist who swept the great body of the reading public off their feet, or is he the great literary artist who (in spite of the tendency prevalent among literary critics to think that any popular author cannot be a great author) nevertheless proved to dazzle even the most rigorous of literary critics ? Is Dickens primarily a magnetic actor who somehow or other conquered the writing profession, or is he a great novelist who managed to conquer the stage as well ? If we think of him as a novelist, is he primarily a comic novelist, or is he primarily the social crusader who made of his books eloquent pleas for the neglected and the

ill-used, rising on fiery wings to attack all the injustices and cruelties of the world and adding to this activity a further career as a reforming newspaper and magazine editor? All these things constitute simply one aspect of what my friend, Lionel Trilling, has called the remarkable way of the Victorians with time.

Their capacity for being able magically to expand it, so that in twenty-four hours they could accomplish an amazing multiplicity of achievements, turning out scores of books, filling long shelves like Anthony Trollope in the mere time left over from being a Post Office Inspector, or writing volumes of poems and critical essays like Matthew Arnold, in the intervals between serving as a government inspector of schools.

How can a single man, we ask ourselves when we contemplate the career of Dickens, have thus done the work of half a dozen men living half a dozen different lives. And Dickens was, besides those things I have already noted, a welfare worker establishing and superintending a reformatory for the rehabilitation of repentent prostitutes: he helped in the development of free night schools in the slums of London, he initiated slum clearance and model housing projects—laying down all the principles upon which they should be constructed. What sort of man was Dickens in the midst of all these activities? That is a still further paradox. His mingling of a roaring self-willed egoism on the one hand, with the most whole-hearted generosity on the other, the ostentatious glorying in his own importance that led him to dress in flashy waistcoats and glittering jewellery and refer to himself in the third person as the *Inimitable Boz*, combined with a kindness that supported a whole army of dependants and made him willing to lend a helping hand to everyone. We have the paradox of the fact that Dickens was a hard and implacable fighter who never yielded an inch to criticism, at the same time that he was capable of a tender sympathy that would turn around immediately to help those whom he had fought—as he did, for example with the widow and orphans of Macrone, his first publisher, with whom he had fought most bitterly, or as he did later on with William Hall, and with Thackeray, and with others.

We have in Dickens a fierce bargainer for his own financial rights, insistent upon extracting from publishers every penny that he regarded as his due, and yet, at the same time, a man who despised the acquisitive ethics of business men. We have in him the prosperous citizen who lived in an almost ostentatious splendour and exulted in his own earnings over and over again, and who at the same time was willing to give freely of his time and money to all those who suffered from misfortune.

We have in Dickens a kind father, an affectionate father, a tender father who was at the same time the most rigorous of disciplinarians and almost, indeed, a domestic tyrant according to his daughter, Katie. He was in the habit of inspecting his two daughters' attic-story rooms every morning before he settled down to his own work and leaving severe reprimands in the form of pin cushion notes, if he found they had not put away their things but, at the same time, if they had added some pretty piece of decoration to the room since his last visit, that would

go down on the pin-cushion note too. His son, Alfred Tennyson Dickens, had an anecdote of one occasion at Tavistock Square. He came into the house and removing his coat, instead of hanging it up in the hall, proceeded to brush it vigorously with a whisk broom in the dining room, when his father suddenly came in. And he never, said Alfred Tennyson Dickens, by any chance repeated *that* particular mistake again.

We have in Dickens the further paradox that here is a man who is in his writing, and evidently in his sentiments, truly too the idealiser of the home and the family, who broke up his own home; the loving portrayer of wives and mothers who is cruelly intolerant to his own wife and the mother of his own children.

We have all sorts of paradoxical contrasts in Dickens's character. On the surface, for example, everyone who met him found in him a warmth, a confidingness, a friendliness, an intimacy of manner which convinced that particular observer that *he* must be a unique person towards whom Dickens felt a special kind of warmth; and indeed there was much to be said for the feeling that that represented a sincere outflowing of genuine friendliness on Dickens's part but, at the same time that he thus produced the impression of absolute confidingness, there were deep inward elements of reserve in Dickens that made it quite impossible for him actually to tell his most intimate thoughts and feelings to any except a very few people. Forster, perhaps, one of them, and Wilkie Collins another, and not all of what he felt even to them. On the surface then he was all confidingness, within, deep reserves of withheld feeling so that he confessed in a letter written in his later life that he had difficulty in showing the full degree of his affection even to his own children except when they were very young.

We have in Dickens a strange fusion again of high spirits and of melancholy so that he is capable in sweeping in a moment from one to the other in something almost resembling the movie depressive cycle. Here, G. K. Chesterton says truly of Dickens that he was the kind of man perfectly capable, if he felt the need of fresh air and he found that the windows were stuck, of breaking the window in order to let the air in. He was the kind of man who needed sometimes to have an audience whereupon, Chesterton suggested, he was capable of waking everybody in the house in the middle of the night in order to participate in his high spirits, and on other occasions needing such complete quiet and isolation that everyone had to walk around trembling on tiptoe. These elements of contrast show themselves even in Dickens's description of the excitement with which he wrote his books. Recall, for instance, Dickens's account of the *Christmas Carol*, when he spent hours walking at a breathtaking speed, a breakneck speed, through the streets of London even in the darkest of its slums, laughing and crying as he thought of what he was going to do.

We have in Dickens a curious combination of the highest degree of self-confidence, so that even at the very beginning of his career he could announce with assurance that he was certain that his fame was going to be made with *Pickwick Papers*, possessing at the same time, a sensitive vulnerability to adverse criticism upon

his own writing. In later years he consistently refrained from reading newspaper criticisms of his work in order to avoid being upset by having his eyes suddenly light on something that was not complimentary.

These things finally lead up to the greatest paradox of all which is the one that I have tried to imply in the title of my biography: *Charles Dickens, His Tragedy and Triumph.* The fact that Dickens managed triumphantly to use his own sufferings and misfortunes as the very sources of his insight into, and his pity for, the sufferings of others, that Dickens's unhappiness deepened his understanding and spurred his sympathy, impelled him into a continual intellectual and artistic development, so that underneath all this growth it was the very qualities enabling him to overcome the obstacles before him that, at the same time, contained the seeds of his own unhappiness. In the midst then of his very public victories he was consumed by inward misery, and by the health-destroying course of violently exciting public readings recklessly induced the early death that destroyed him.

Then there are the paradoxes of this incredibly full and various and dramatic career and personality that Dickens crammed into the half dozen lives that constituted his short fifty-eight years, in a fulgent multiplicity that makes his life an accumulation of paradoxes. Of many of its aspects, of course, I need do no more than remind members of the Dickens Fellowship; there is first that little boy in Rochester and Chatham, lurking in odd corners of the old Cathedral and Castle at Rochester or enjoying the bustle, and the noises, and the smells of Chatham Dockyard; then, a little later, the heartbroken child taken out of school, who was to become famous in the world through the account of him in *David Copperfield,* terrified over his father's imprisonment for debt, condemned to toil in a blacking warehouse and wetting his pillow with nightly tears because all his dreams of growing up into being a learned and distinguished man seemed to be destroyed forever. Then a little later still a schoolboy again, and then an office-boy in the solicitor firm of Ellis and Blackmore; later again a shorthand reporter in the Court of Doctors Common, and almost simultaneously with this part of his career that broken-hearted romance with Maria Beadnell that left him so emotionally destroyed that it became almost impossible for him ever to yield himself completely and entirely to the tenderness of love again. Simultaneously with the last stages of these emotional distresses we find him as the brilliant young reporter in Parliament at the very top of his profession at the age of twenty-three and in competition with men who had spent a lifetime in the Reporters' Gallery, a reporter of whom one dazzled colleague exclaimed: *there never was such a shorthand writer*! Only a year later than this we have the novelist who sprang, at the age of twenty-four, into world-wide fame with *Pickwick Papers,* a literary farce that has never been equalled or surpassed in the history of fiction. *Pickwick* was enjoyed, adulated, exulted over by people of all ranks of society from newsboys and even illiterates, hearing its successive numbers read aloud to them, to lawyers and judges on

their benches, and doctors on their professional rounds. Again, canes, cabs, capes, cats, and dogs even were named after Pickwick and Jingle and Weller and other characters in the book. Only a little while after that we have all the acclaim and fury of his triumphant American Tour in 1842 with ladies, even in Boston, swooning with worship and surreptitiously snipping bits out of the back of his fur coat to take away as souvenirs; at the same time angry newspapers howled that he was a mercenary scoundrel for thinking that Americans should pay for his books.

In the course of the 1840's we had still another development in Dickens, the amateur actor who was so brilliantly successful that even the great tragedian Macready, in spite of his professional scorn for amateur actors admired Dickens's acting. So successful was he that Queen Victoria and her Court laughed unrestrainedly over his performance in Mark Lemon's farce, *Mr. Nightingale's Diary* and dissolved in tears when he performed the death of Richard Wardour in Wilkie Collins's melodrama, *The Frozen Deep*.

Finally at the close of his varied career there is the dramatic public reader that Dickens became in his last fourteen years, who could make people howl with mirth over Mr. Toots in *Little Dombey*; who could make even the rather dour Carlyle guffaw over and over again at the trial scene in *Pickwick Papers*, and who rendered Sikes's murder of Nancy from *Oliver Twist* with such horror that literally a dozen ladies fainted in every audience and had to be borne out, Dickens said, as stiff as boards. This is the man slaying himself with over-exertion who died at Gad's Hill in June 1870.

The great problem, of course, was how to shape all this complex and varied and seemingly ever contradictory material into a single story with a unified pattern of meaning. It was the problem that I tried to solve in my book. Dickens's close friend, Forster, in his great biography written shortly after the novelist's death saw Dickens's life chiefly as a success story as in part, of course, it was, but that loving, stubborn old man brightened all the shadows in Dickens's life, especially those that had gathered about the latter part of it, and emphasised all the gleaming victories. In addition to that there are many details about Dickens's life that Forster either did not know or that he suppressed intelligently enough for motives of tact and propriety, inasmuch as he was writing his book only a few years after its subject's death when many of the other actors in it were still alive. In addition to that there were probably things that Forster did not know and that have since come to light. I have, myself, encountered something like 3,500 unpublished letters and other unpublished documents including some that had to be rendered legible by the use of improved photography because someone had taken the pains to black them over very carefully with extremely heavy black ink. What the new evidence reveals is the strange, the fascinating, the paradoxical pattern that I have tried to indicate, in which an ever more delirious public success is accompanied by an ever deepening burden of private disillusionment with the world. Meanwhile, Dickens's readers continued to shower him

with applause, as in his novels he revealed all the evils that he saw in society, and in the fevered excitement of those readings of the last dozen or so years of his life (as I have noted) carried on relentlessly, despite the fact that he was under no financial need to do so; despite an ever increasing burden of ill health and threatening signs of paralysis; despite the repeated warnings of his doctors that he was endangering his life in pursuing this career. What we see is something that really amounts to the equivalent of a protracted public suicide. Out of Dickens's inward grief and dissatisfaction with society, he created the ever more splendid achievement of his artistic triumphs in a maturity that far transcends even the great achievements of his brilliant youth. The poor little drudge escaped from the dark shadows of these earlier stages of his career and seemed almost to feel as if his very success might be only a dream from which he might awake once more to the nightmare reality of his childhood. And yet Dickens managed gloriously to soar above all these shadows too, for, although like all human beings, like all of us, Dickens was capable of intense self pity, he never remained lost in self pity and that is somewhat rarer. He was able to use his own sufferings to unlock the springs of humanity in his spirit and make himself one of the nobly sympathetic parts of mankind. Instead of becoming a hopeless and bitter cynic as he confronted human evil, Dickens fought it both with fire and with laughter. He became one of the world's great comic writers and one of its great workers for the welfare of mankind. Instead of becoming animated by a sneering sense of human pettiness, he became one of the great affirmers of the dignity of man. I emphasise this note of human dignity in Dickens's work because it is not always found in the writers of critical comedy. The comic writers who are not just high spirited clams guffawing in irresponsible hilarity, the comic writers who instead make comedy out of the perception of human shortcomings and absurdities are often inclined to a depreciating acidity at the same time. In contrast to this tendency I think we may note that even Dickens's satire, although it is often animated by a fierce hostility to stupidity and evil, leaves no intrinsic scorn for human nature itself.

Dickens's great purely comic figures are invariably seen not merely with laughter but with love. Mr. Pickwick begins as a silly old dupe who can be taken in by any imposter, and who is engaged in ludicrous enterprises like investigating the theory of tittlebats, whatever that may be. But Mr. Pickwick, you will notice, develops into a noble figure of benevolence and of magnanimity, and although the things he does later on in the book are sometimes quixotic, they are not stupid, they are not foolish they are not imbecile. When he decides that he will refuse to pay the fine that had been imposed upon him in the Bardell breach of promise suit, it is because he refuses to submit to a dishonest legal shakedown, and we respect that decision on his part. He is never more ludicrously at odds with the world than when he is being badgered and bullied and defeated by the outrageous Buzfuz in the court scene and yet he is never more assuredly in command of our sympathy, and even, of our admiration than at

precisely that time, and the same thing is true of hosts of the other comic characters in Dickens.

Dick Swiveller with gorgeous love of high-faluting language and gesture in which he will humbly hand himself a bumper of wine and haughtily receive it from himself or Flora Finching with that incredible outpouring of absolutely punctuationless volubility, and Micawber with his wonderful pompous rhetorical turns of phrase, or the Crummles family, Mr. Crummles in particular, whose idea of saying an affectionate good-bye to someone, is to fling his arms around the other's neck and look fixedly over his shoulder at the opposite wall, or young John Chivery in *Little Dorrit* who likes to sit in his mother's backyard between the lines of washing because, he says, with superb imbecility, it reminds him of trees, or Joe Gargery whom Dickens describes as looking like a scarecrow in good circumstances, or Captain Cuttle with his magnificent capacity for scrambling incongruous quotation into a hash more confused than anything you find even in the poetry of T. S. Eliot; or, finally, Mr. Toots, with his waistcoats and his rapid "It's of no consequence whatsoever." These great comic portraits of which I have been reminding you for the last few minutes serve to lead us, I think, to an often repeated accusation against Dickens; that he merely caricatures human nature rather than portrays it. On this point I am going to appeal to the authority of the great modern philosopher, George Santayana, who is one of Dickens's great admirers.

To Santayana, whose judgement in this matter, I think, should carry weight, the accusation represented merely the limitations, the shortcomings of what he calls "higher snobs" and "aesthetes" and he goes on to say: "When people say that Dickens exaggerates it seems to me they can have no eyes and no ears. They probably have only *notions* of what things and people are . . . they have little sense for those living grimaces that play from moment to moment upon the countenance of the world. When Dickens slashes through the conventions the human ego protests, 'what a bad mirror . . . for surely I have never looked like that . . . *I* was never so sentimental. I don't believe that there ever were any people like Quilp or Squeers or Sergeant Buzfuz.' But," Santayana goes on, "the polite world is lying; there are such people; we are such people ourselves in our true moments, in our veritable impulses; but we are careful to stifle and hide these moments from ourselves and from the world; to purse and pucker ourselves into the masque of our conventional personality; and so, simpering, we profess that it is very coarse and inartistic of Dickens to undo our life's work for us in an instant, and remind us of what we are."

But Dickens reminds us of what we are without ever losing those sympathies that were rooted in his almost endless relish for the richness and variety of life itself and human nature, a love of experience in Dickens that exulted in the pure vividness with which things are themselves. Dickens could like and dislike things and people. He could love and hate but there was about both his love and his hatred no patronage, no snobbery. He never sniffed at anything. He could be desperately unhappy. He could never

be bored. He was fascinated literally by every aspect of life, by the decaying vegetables in Covent Garden Market that fascinated him when he was a small boy, by the fishy smell of Mr. Peggotty's boathouse, where, you will remember, David Copperfield tells us that crabs and lobsters never left off pinching each other. He could be fascinated by the smell and the texture and the crackle of Bob Cratchit's goose and of potatoes boiling in a pot and knocking violently to be let out and peeled and eaten. He could be fascinated by the foul gutters of Saffron Hill where Fagin and Bill Sikes and the Artful Dodger lived. He was fascinated by the spangled skirts of bareback riders in Astley's Circus, by the hemp entangled masts of Chatham Dockyard and of Limehouse, by the rafters of Westminster Hall, by the salt reaches of Cooling Marsh down near his own ultimate home of Gad's Hill. He was fascinated by the dripping rain on the terrace of Chesney Wold, fascinated by Mr. Boffin's odorous dust heaps, and by the polluted air of the old Bailey.

Dickens was not repelled by a lively scoundrel like Mr. Jingle; he did not draw back in disgust even from Poor Jo's malodorous and verminous rags. He felt not patronising contempt for the shabby and drunken Newman Noggs or for the chuckle-headed Mr. Toots. It was all of life that Dickens enjoyed experiencing. In this sense Dickens is a true embodiment of something that we also find in our own American Walt Whitman, that infinite gusto for every variety of experience; but Dickens, unlike Whitman, demonstrated that he could tell a story as well as paint a picture and present you with a panorama. Dickens also exemplified, curiously, still another thing: Walter Pater's expressed desire to lead a life of constant and eager observation, but in Dickens that desire was not attenuated by any of Pater's rather strangulated refinement quivering away from coarseness and vulgarity. It was the entire welter of human experience that Dickens enjoyed, not just delicately selected parts of it. In saying this, however, I would not wish you to think that I was attributing to Dickens any lack of just discrimination in his evaluation of experience. Dickens was for everything that made life richer and fuller and more enjoyable and meaningful, he was against everything that impoverished and destroyed it. He was against the red-nosed Stiggins, and against the bullying Honeythunder, against everybody, even those kinds of professional philanthropists who tried to reduce life to a dispirited grey or who endeavoured to subordinate others to their own desire for power. That is the reason he hated people like the Murdstones, in *David Copperfield*, using religion itself simply as a device for justifying their own cruelty. It was the reason that he was contemptuous of philanthropists like Mrs. Jellyby who can't see the evils inside her own household, or the evils outside her own doorstep, but can see no area for human good except on the banks of the Borrioboola-Gha in Africa, three or five thousand miles away. It was also, of course, the reason that he hated Mrs. Pardiggle who did see evils on her own doorstep, and who crossed the doorstep of the poor brickmakers in *Bleak House*, only to bully them in loud and hectoring tones of voice and leave little pamphlets for them to read which

being illiterate, they were unable to read. It is the reason that Dickens hated the Boodles and Coodles of English parliamentary politics, using political war-cries simply as a device for squabbling with each other about the spoils of parliamentary life. It is finally the reason that he hated the Bounderbys and the Merdles, all of those who were misusing free enterprise to erect a tyrannical system of their own profit at the expense of others. Therefore Dickens was also, of course, against the hideous evils of early industrialism, against the slums, the long hours of labour and dirt and accidents in the factories and the mines, just as in his earlier life, as a young reporter, he had been against those land-owners who were resisting the abolition of the rotten boroughs.

Every book that Dickens wrote was consequently not only a celebration of the true wealth of life, but an attack on cruelty and selfishness. Dickens's heart seized on the sword of a sharp and witty logic that slashed contemptuously through logical humbug and rationalists' special pleading, statistical abstractions and economic theories. It was actual living people that Dickens loved, not that figment of the imaginations of many philanthropists: an abstract humanity. The weapons that Dickens used were those of caricature and burlesque, of melodrama and slapstick. He fought foolishness and evil by exaggerating their excesses. He painted monomania and sophistry in colours of lurid absurdity. He belaboured dogmatism and bigotry with fantastic ridicule. Any kind of fanatical extremism he attacked with the wildest hyperbole. These things are to be found everywhere in Dickens's work. His celebration of the goodness, as such, of the enjoyments of eating and drinking, although against the excesses of drunkenness, his attacks upon the bleakness and dourness of the puritanical and sabbatarian ways of looking upon life, his hatred of bullying philanthropy, his opposition to the abstractions of political economy, as are against the living needs of living people, his insistence that all of the members of the Working Clan had a need for and a right to life and air and water and education and, finally, leisure and enjoyment too. Dickens would have nothing of the idea that the deserving poor could be the only people who had no recreation. If they were deserving, they deserved recreation, too. Finally we find it in Dickens's attitude towards representative government and the growth of democracy. His complaint about democracy in England in the nineteenth century was only that it had not gone far enough; representative institutions, he insisted, must be carried on by further extension of the franchise. He favoured the Reform Bill of 1867 at a time when to a great many respectable middle and upper middle class citizens it embodied a dangerous kind of radicalism. He wrote to a correspondent in Australia that he did not believe that the newly enfranchised classes of people could possibly use their votes any less intelligently than the people who already had the vote were using theirs.

In the very last year of his life, in a public speech, he announced that he had very little faith in the people who govern us but great confidence in the people whom they govern.

These attitudes are implicit in the hosts of living people crowding

the great panorama of Dickens's pages. What writer, except Shakespeare, has created a larger and more various world than Dickens, or one that is more rich in the pulsing truth of actuality. It is significant to see that a writer so different from George Santayana, whom I quoted a while ago, as Bernard Shaw, was also one of the great admirers of Dickens. "He is," Shaw says, "by pure force of genius one of the greatest writers of the world. There is no greatest book of Dickens—all his books form one great life work, a bible in fact. All are magnificent." Dickens's adoring friend, James T. Fields, said of him: "He was the cheerfulest man of his age." But the cheerful demeanour, as I have tried to indicate, the courageous faith in Dickens, were achievements, not just sparkling gifts of temperament. The Pickwick sun had arisen out of the darkness of the prison and the blacking warehouse, not out of the radiance of a cloudless childhood. Dickens maintained through effort and discipline, unvarying, unwavering faith in his fundamental creed, his belief in the generous loyalties and affection of the human spirit, his conviction that the love of the human heart can banish the sordid and evil-smelling dust heaps of society and bring bloom to all the living waste-lands of the world. This resolute belief in life and in humanity was a banner that Dickens held high, in spite of all the evils that he saw so clearly and so pitifully and in spite of the gathering clouds of personal misery that darkened his own later years. Out of his sympathy and indignation at men's sufferings, Dickens built up a picture of the world and its failures, of the obstacles to the fulfilment of human needs almost unsurpassed for clarity and understanding. Out of his own life of struggle and frustration, he wrought a philosophy of dauntless courage that could laugh while it fought and struck its giant blow for mankind. Dickens was one of the heroes of Art, not merely battling the unpastured dragons of life's waste but enriching and creating a world.

BROADSTAIRS FESTIVAL

The Annual Dickens Festival at Broadstairs takes place from October 20th to 23rd this year, when the principal event will be five performances by the Broadstairs Dickens Players, of *The Man from Somewhere*, a new adaptation of *Our Mutual Friend*, written and produced by Gladys Waterer. In addition there will be a Dickens recital, a lecture, and a tour of Old Broadstairs, while Dickens House and Bleak House will be open for inspection. An added attraction this year is the fact that visitors will be able to stay at Bleak House and enjoy the wonderful view of the bay and the sea that so delighted Dickens. The house is now admirably fitted for the reception of visitors.

By K. J. Fielding

A HUNDRED years ago England was becoming increasingly conscious of the strike as a means of forcible negotiation. In the City, gentlemen had to walk when the cabbies objected to the new Act reducing their fares to 6d. a mile; while, in Wigan, striking miners attacked the Royal Hotel where their masters met, and were scattered only by a detachment of the 34th Foot. Although the nation was prosperous, the miners were out, the bricklayers were out, and the engineers were back only after a determined effort to gain effective power for their new Amalgamated Society. The outbreaks were local; but they were evidence of general unrest. When the weavers of Preston went on strike in October

The Temperance Hall, or "Cockpit" at Preston where the strikers received their pay as described in *Household Words*.

Illustrated London News, Nov. 12th, 1853

1853, therefore, the whole country was vitally interested in this new challenge to the domination of the masters.

The history of such industrial disputes is often to be found in newspapers rather than official records; but with the strike at Preston it was taken up by novelists and special feature-writers as well as by the daily press. Charles Dickens paid a visit in order to write an article for *Household Words*; *The Leisure Hour* had a special report entitled "A Town on Strike"; and "A Prestonian" contributed a long analysis to *Eliza Cook's Journal*. No less informative were Dickens's *Hard Times* and Mrs. Gaskell's *North and South*; for though they had not had the intention of taking the disputes between Capital and Labour as their subject before the Preston strike began, there is no doubt that it influenced them strongly once they started to write.[1]

[1] *Hard Times* was published in *Household Words* from April 1st to August 12th, and was followed by *North and South* from September 2nd, 1854, to January 27th, 1855. Mrs. Gaskell, however, had started before Dickens. After seeing part of the novel Forster had written to her on January 16th, 1854, "I say very heartily and earnestly go on with the story whether it be for Dickens or not"; and, on April 10th: "As to the current which Dickens's story is likely to take I have regretted to see that the manufacturing discontents are likely to clash with part of your plan, but . . . I *know* with what a different purpose and subsidiary to what quite opposite manifestations of character and passion *your* strike will be introduced, and I am your witness, if necessary, that your notion in this matter existed before and quite independently of his."—From transcripts (Shorter collection), Brotherton Library, University of Leeds.

The causes of the strike are not easy to define. In its simplest form it was a straightforward dispute about wages. But the negotiations were badly handled, and on both sides the issue soon became entirely a matter of principle, the men demanding a rise of "a whole ten per cent." and the masters refusing to be "coerced." When it was clear that the weavers would be able to force the mill-owners to agree one by one, by staging separate strikes against each employer in turn, the masters closed the mills. The men declared it a lock-out, and the mill-owners insisted it was a strike; but neither were prepared to surrender.

The situation was complicated by further differences, but those which were openly debated were less important than the fundamental struggle for power. For although they had no permanent union the strikers focussed the attention of the country on Preston, since if they won the same process could evidently be repeated elsewhere with the same effect.

The leaders of the strike seldom advanced their claims beyond the mere ten per cent., and it was largely the employers who saw it as a contest "not only of capital against labour but that of property against communism." This was the thesis of Henry Ashworth, a spokesman for the mill-owners at a meeting of the British Association at Liverpool. In Mrs. Gaskell's *North and South* the mill-owner's mother, Mrs. Thornton, expresses the same point of view equally strongly:

> "A strike?" asked Margaret. "What for? What are they going to strike for?"
>
> "For the mastership and ownership of other people's property," said Mrs. Thornton, with a fierce snort . . .
>
> "They are wanting higher wages, I suppose?" asked Mr. Hale.
>
> "That is the face of the thing. But the truth is, they want to be masters, and make the masters slaves on their own ground."

Such was certainly the employers' view, and it was one with which Mrs. Gaskell, herself, generally agreed though she could not resist a touch of satire when it was expressed by the master's mother. When Mr. Hale asks Mr. Thornton, "Is there necessity for calling it *a battle* between two classes?" he sternly replies: "It is true." This was the reason why the masters refused to consent to arbitration, for it was they who openly recognised the dispute as a class struggle and who refused to allow themselves to be outflanked by outside interference. "We will hardly submit to the decision of an umpire," declares Thornton, "much less to the intervention of a meddler with only a smattering of the knowledge of the real facts of the case, even though that meddler be called the High Court of Parliament."

Public opinion did not question the right to strike, but deplored the serious losses caused by 20,000 workers being idle for nearly seven months. There was widespread sympathy for the weavers; and although it was recognised that the dispute could be decided only by arbitration or by the victory of either masters or men there was a general belief that such contests could be avoided in future if there were a better understanding between them. This

opinion was most strongly voiced by Dickens in *Hard Times* and *Household Words*.

From the novel alone Dickens's opinions can easily be misunderstood, although in the article they had been much more openly expressed. With one eye on Cobden and Bright he had concluded by asking:

> Gentlemen are found, in great manufacturing towns, ready enough to extol imbecile mediation with dangerous madmen abroad; can none be brought to think of authorised mediation and explanation at home? I do not suppose that such a knotted difficulty as this is to be at all untangled by a morning-party in the Adelphi; but . . . masters right, or men right . . . there is certain ruin to both in the continuance or frequent revival of this breach.

Dickens objected to the actual intransigence of the masters as strongly as he satirised the mill-owners in the novel, and though he made it clear that he thought the men were "engaged in an unreasonable struggle," he deplored the way in which even in the liberal press he had found "such references" to them "as might have been made by an irascible General to rebels and brigands in arms." He maintained that there could be no permanent settlement by force, but only by conciliation.

In his own day Dickens was blamed for his portrait of the master, Josiah Bounderby, and more recently he has been condemned for his character of the trade union agitator Slackbridge, who has been dismissed as "a figment of his imagination."[1] Yet Mr. Humphry House has already pointed out, in *The Dickens World*, how Slackbridge was a development of "Gruffshaw," a delegate Dickens described in the article "On Strike"; and further enquiry now shows that "Gruffshaw" was a sketch of one of the actual strike leaders, Mortimer Grimshaw, whom Dickens heard addressing a meeting on his visit to Preston. An independent report by a local observer shows that his description was far from being exaggerated:

> Mortimer Grimshaw is a . . . man very much marked with the small-pox. He is well known by his white hat, which, I suppose, he wears after the fashion of Hunt and Cobbett . . . And, as John Bright plants his elevated fist firmly in advance, whilst eloquently expounding his doctrines of the Peace Society, so Mortimer Grimshaw advocates liberty to the oppressed "factory slaves" with a dogmatical invective and a blatant vituperation more worthy of a Russian despot than an English patriot.[2]

The real leader of the weavers was George Cowell,[3] a man of great ability, good sense and moderation, and Dickens's chief inaccuracy was in writing of Slackbridge as if he were typical of the men's representatives. Yet both Grimshaw and Cowell were local men, unheard of before the strike, whereas Slackbridge is introduced as an outside agitator. The differences between the book and the article in *Household Words* are enough to show that such changes were deliberate, and from what is known of Dickens's intentions it is clear that he wanted to give it a rather wider

[1] Edgar Johnson, *Charles Dickens, His Tragedy and Triumph*, 1953, II, 811.
[2] "Lancashire Stump Oratory," *Eliza Cook's Journal*, August 19th, 1854, p. 258.
[3] *See* page 146.

significance. He had had the idea of the novel for some time, and in directing his satire against union officials rather than local strike leaders there is little doubt that he had in mind the strike of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, which had centred on Manchester in 1851. Apart from Grimshaw, who was by no means typical, the strike leaders were careful in their activities; and, at one of the first meetings after the lock-out George Cowell had even concluded by calling for three cheers for "Queen Victoria and the Royal Family," followed by three more for "Ten per cent. and the people."

The only danger to peace was in the introduction of blacklegs or "knobsticks," in order to work some of the mills which stayed open; but they were unmentioned by Dickens and other reporters, though they played an important part at Preston and were the cause of the riot in *North and South*. No doubt Mrs. Gaskell also had earlier strikes in mind, but the course of events she described in the novel was very close to what actually happened. Both in fact and fiction the masters imported a large body of Irish; but at Preston the leaders had a proper control over their supporters and violence was avoided. It was in trying to persuade some of the Irish to break their contracts, however, that several of the strike-leaders at Preston laid themselves open to prosecution. They were arrested, and released on bail; and it was only because the dispute came to an end that they were never brought to trial.

The end of the strike was brought about by a failure in funds, for the men had been maintained by adequate contributions collected from all the workers in the neighbouring textile towns. At the end of the fourth week the weavers were even jubilantly singing a broadside ballad which gave their employers "A Month's Notice":

> We've Blackburn at one side
> And Stockport at the other,
> And we know they will stick true to us,
> Like sister and like brother.
> And if they'll send us their support,
> And never do lament,
> We'll stand out firmly side by side,
> All for our ten per cent.[1]

But though all went well for the weavers as long as their fraternal comrades at Stockport and Blackburn were content to contribute sixpence a week to keep them out, at the critical moment their leaders lost control and the Stockport workers came out on a strike of their own. Neither district was able to support itself alone, and after long months of living on strike pay it was disastrous at Preston. The contributions to the central fund dropped at once, the weavers began to go back, and by the beginning of May the strike was over in its twenty-ninth week. The public lost interest immediately, for a few days later Mr. Gladstone announced that a duty of a shilling a gallon was to be added to Scotch whisky and that the income tax was doubled. The mill chimneys began to smoke once more as another war began, and new orders were placed as troops were embarked for the Crimea.

[1] From an important, three-volume collection of cuttings, broadsides and pamphlets about the strike, now in the County Record Office, Preston.

48th ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

PORTSMOUTH

ONCE again members from all over the country, several from Boston, Mass., and one from Australia, gathered in conference in May, this year at the invitation of the Birthplace Branch.

On the opening evening, Friday, May 28th, the company were the guests of the Lord Mayor and Corporation of Portsmouth, at a performance of "The Fol-de-rols," in the South Parade Pier Theatre. The weather was disappointing but the quality of the brilliant little company quickly compensated for that, and laughter and gaiety were the key-notes of the evening. At curtain fall the company were received by the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, Councillor G. A. and Mrs. Day, in the Minor Hall, and dancing proceeded until midnight.

The Business Meeting

On the Saturday morning the company again assembled in the South Parade Pier Theatre for the Annual Business Meeting. The Lord Mayor opened the proceedings with a very warm welcome to the members, to which the Chairman, Mrs. Jane Bacon, Chairman of Council, responded, and a most cordial motion of thanks was voted to the Corporation for the hospitality it had so generously extended to Conference, and in particular, to the Lord and Lady Mayoress for the enthusiastic and gracious manner in which they had welcomed and entertained the members. Then followed the presentation by the Lord Mayor of the awards made in the extensive competitions in recitals from the works of Dickens, organised by the Portsmouth Branch. These are becoming increasingly popular and successful as the years pass, and it was very fitting that the winning candidates should this year receive their awards at the hands of the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, in the presence of so many Dickensians from all parts of the country. The Lord Mayor had then to proceed to other engagements, and Mrs. Jane Bacon made her:

Chairman's Address

Mrs. Bacon said that Portsmouth was celebrated for many things. It had great Naval traditions. Many great ships had sailed from this cradle of the British Navy, but one frail barque, launched in 1812, was destined to circumnavigate the world. There were many seamen to be met in the novels of Dickens, but most of them associated with London rather than with the coastal towns, men like Cuttle, Bunsby, and Bill Barley. But nothing could take from Portsmouth the glory of Vincent Crummles and his talented company at the Old Theatre Royal. Mrs. Bacon concluded by quoting, with admirable effect, Dickens's attempted identification of his birthplace when visiting Portsmouth as told by George Dolby.

Mr. Greaves began by offering the Fellowship's congratulations to those Branches which are celebrating the Jubilee of their foundation this year: Chester, U.S.A., Melbourne and Winnipeg, overseas; and since last year's Conference, Sheffield, Shrewsbury and Birmingham, at home, and to the newly founded one at Bloomington, Ind., U.S.A. He continued by referring to the frequently expressed anxiety that the Fellowship does not appear to attract youth in great numbers, and alleging that success is more probable in efforts to attract those reaching an age when a book by the fireside proves to be one of the great joys of life. Charitable aims have been, as ever, in the forefront of the programmes of a great number of branches. Since the completion of the Endowment of the Dickens House, that side of our work has been concerned this year with the preservation of rather less important matters. Nevertheless this vital aspect of our work has not been forgotten. The invaluable library established at Dickens House had again been frequently consulted by students, advertisers, and many others. The Dickens House was also the subject of a broadcast in the French Canadian Service during the year—another valuable piece of publicity. *The Humour of Charles Dickens*, published by the *News Chronicle*, in our Jubilee year, was reissued in a further edition of 5,000 copies, resulting in further royalties for the Dickens Fellowship. Concluding, Mr. Greaves ventured to suggest that "we are at the moment in the position of our old friend Wilkins Micawber," and in conclusion, to adapt his famous remarks: "There are periods in our history, when it has been requisite that we should pause, until expected events turn up; when it is necessary that we should fall back, for what we trust we shall not be accused of presumption in terming—a spring. You find us fallen back for a spring, and we have every reason to believe that a vigorous leap will shortly be the result."

The Hon. Treasurer's Report

Mr. E. J. Mitchell began his report by paying a well-deserved tribute to the valuable work of the Hon. Auditors, Messrs. Morris, Gregory & Co., Chartered Accountants of Manchester, and asked Mr. H. E. Evans, the senior partner in that firm, to accept his thanks.

Dealing first with the accounts of *The Dickensian*, he reported an excess of expenditure over receipts of £68 8*s*. 5*d*., as against £96 in 1952, which loss had been reduced to £45 by the receipt of £51 in donations. The donations this year had been £13, so that real loss on the year's publication was £55. The additional loss could be in part explained by the fact that fewer Back Numbers of the magazine had been sold during the year.

In the accounts of The Dickens Fellowship, the income was less by £50 than in 1952, but expenditure was down by £41, so that the excess of income over expenditure was £130, as against £139 in 1952. After setting off the loss on *The Dickensian*, therefore, the balance to be carried forward on the capital account is £991 as against £930 last year, and our assets, after setting off

creditors are £2,658. The only change in our assets is that in June 1953 the Trustees of the Dickens House decided to repay to the Fellowship the loan of £550 which was advanced in 1925 to assist in the purchase of 48 Doughty Street and this was re-invested in the purchase of £576 British Gas 3½% Guaranteed Stock. The investment was worth £559 on December 31st, but Mr. Mitchell noted that on the previous day the value was £571.

Regarding the accounts of the Dickens House, the Hon. Treasurer said that the final investment of the funds raised for the Endowment Fund was made during 1953 and that they now stood at £10,257 10*s.* 3*d.* In that year that sum yielded £315 18*s.* 2*d.* which figure should be increased during the current year.

After these reports had been adopted the Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer, and Hon. Editor of *The Dickensian* were re-elected on the proposition of Mrs. H. E. Evans, Manchester, who did so in a highly appreciative and delightfully humorous speech.

Presentation to the Hon. Editor

Mr. Greaves replied to this speech and thanked the company for the renewed confidence expressed by the company in the re-election of himself and his colleagues. He then went on to speak of the services rendered to the Fellowship by Mr. Leslie C. Staples, during his term as Hon. Secretary during the troubled years 1940 to 1946, and for his Editorship of *The Dickensian* for ten years since 1945. To the intense astonishment of the recipient, Mr. Greaves then requested the Chairman to present to Mr. Staples, as "a token of their esteem, and in appreciation of his work," on behalf of many of his friends in the Fellowship, all over the world, a number of gifts, on the occasion of his completion of forty years' membership of the Fellowship, and the Golden Jubilee of *The Dickensian*. They included a fine Derby figure of David Garrick as Richard III, a case of superb eighteenth-century table-silver, and a cheque for £100.

The presentation was greeted with generous enthusiasm by the audience. Of what Mr. Staples said in reply, he has now no notion. He was deeply moved: he remembers that. He hopes that he managed to convey to his friends then present that he was, and ever will be, profoundly grateful for the expressions of affection for himself, and appreciation of what he has tried to do for the last fifteen years, which had been so warmly received that morning, and for the magnanimity of the gifts representing them. He addresses a wider circle of friends on another page.

At this point a break for refreshments enabled the Editor to recover, in part, his composure. When business was resumed, Messrs. Morris, Gregory & Co., Manchester, were re-elected Hon. Auditors, and it was decided to send to them a cordial vote of thanks for their services in the past.

The Hon. Editor then spoke of *The Dickensian*. He regretted that the Fellowship's magazine was the only item in its activities that did not pay its way. He urged that that could and should be

remedied, and further urged that efforts be renewed to increase the circulation.

The dwindling representation of Branches at Council meetings in London was referred to by the Hon. Secretary, and branch representatives were urged to alter this state of affairs by every means in their power, in order that the Fellowship may be truly governed by itself and not by Headquarters in London.

Invitations for the Annual Conference of 1955 to be held in Blackpool, from May 13th-17th, and for that of 1956 to be held in Eastbourne, from May 25th-28th, were received from the Branches of the Fellowship in those towns, and gratefully accepted.

It was decided that the Book for Study during the season 1955-6 should be *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Master Humphrey's Clock*. That for the coming season, *Nicholas Nickleby*, having been decided by Conference last year.

Mr. George Mackrell, Hon. Treasurer of the N.W. Regional Group of Branches, read a report of another successful year's working of that flourishing combination. It is greatly to be hoped that Regional Groups of Branches will be formed, or re-formed, in other parts of the country, and over seas, for it is the first conviction of Council that such activities can only result in a greater strength for the Fellowship.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman, Mrs. Jane Bacon, proposed by Mrs. H. L. Bagley, Boston, Mass., brought the morning's business to a close.

The afternoon was devoted to visits to Portsmouth Cathedral, H.M.S. "Victory" in Portsmouth Dockyard, and the Dickens Birthplace Museum.

The Conference Dinner

In the evening a very large company attended the Conference Dinner at Kimbel's Restaurant, at which the Lord Mayor, Councillor G. A. Day, President of the Portsmouth Branch, presided, accompanied by the Lady Mayoress.

The Immortal Memory of Charles Dickens

The toast of the evening was proposed by Mr. ALFRED NOYES, C.B.E., Past President, who said:

The privilege of proposing the Toast of Dickens at a gathering of the Dickens Fellowship in the place where he was born is one of which anyone might be proud.

Portsmouth has a great many associations of which it might be proud, but I think if our civilisation endures for another, shall we say, thousand years, and I admit there are a great many strenuous attempts being made in a good many quarters to prevent that happening; if it should endure, I think one thing is quite certain one association with Portsmouth—perhaps a great many others but one quite certainly—will remain.

Just as certainly as Stratford-on-Avon is connected with one of the three or four greatest writers of the world, so I think Portsmouth will always be connected with Charles Dickens.

Perhaps there will be no competition between Stratford-on-Avon and Portsmouth as there was between many cities for the birthplace of Homer, but I think it quite conceivable that there may be competition of a different kind. Five hundred years even is quite a long time in the estimation of literary values, and it's quite possible that Dickens may come even nearer to Shakespeare by that time than he is to-day.

No writer certainly has ever been more beloved than Charles Dickens. No writer has ever advanced into his second century bearing more sheaves with him than Charles Dickens. I doubt whether there is any writer who has had such a compliment paid to him as that of a quarterly magazine entirely devoted to his memory and his books, kept going for fifty years with no other subject than that of Charles Dickens.

I don't want to suggest for a moment that one wants to depreciate Shakespeare in order to exalt Dickens—that is the wrong way of doing things—but I think in five hundred years Dickens may come very near indeed. There may be competition even.

Let me put it this way. What would we not give to-day for a writer who could give us a picture of Elizabethan times, of the ordinary man and woman in the City of London, comparable with that which Dickens gives us of the London and England of his day?

Shakespeare gave us some glorious pictures of foreign lands, of the high and mighty Caesars, Mark Antony, King Lear, the Prince of Denmark, but where do we find in Shakespeare that wonderful compassion for the multitude we find in Dickens, the way in which every single, separate individual still means something to him, and his sense of pity for even the erring? You don't get that in Shakespeare.

Very often I think it is a mistake to look upon Dickens as a comic writer chiefly, though his range of comedy is enormous. That again, I think is a wider range—I don't want to say it is a greater gift, but it is a wider range—than that of Shakespeare. When you think of the immense range, from the well-known figures like Mr. Micawber and Sam Weller to the minor but wonderful small character of Mr. Toots in *Dombey and Son*, where do you get anything like that in any other writer?

Think of what Swinburne said of the ineffable Sairey. He said no words can express our gratitude for the altruistic devotion which is phrased in the symbolic simple words: "If I could afford to lay all my feller creeturs out for nothink, I would gladly do it, sich is the love I bears 'em."

And the wonderful eloquence of Miss Miggs in *Barnaby Rudge*. It may be exaggerated, but what wonderful satire it is when she describes her own life: "A toiling, moiling, constant-working, always-being-found-fault-with, never-giving-satisfactions, nor-having-no-time-to-clean-onself potters' wessel . . . My only becoming occupations is to help young flaunting pagins to brush and comb and titiwate theirselves into whitening and suppulchres, and leave the young men to think there an't a bit of padding in it nor no pinching ins nor fillings out nor pomatums nor deceits nor earthly wanities."

Well, that glorious comic range carried in it many other figures of the same humble station in life, if you like to call it so, but who are really the salt of the earth. Dickens really discovered them. It was a great discovery of the new modern world, and of the fact that the new modern world consisted or should consist of individuals who had souls. But nobody, of course, can suggest for a moment that characters like Dan'l Peggotty or Nurse Peggotty were comic characters.

I think also of those words of Dickens about his boyhood, that wonderful passage quoted in Forster's *Life*, when he says: "I know that I have lounged about the streets, insufficiently and unsatisfactorily fed. I know that, but for the mercy of God, I might easily have been, for any care that was taken of me, a little robber or a little vagabond." And that wonderful little prayer he gives us at the end, saying that as a houseless little boy—he did not use the word homeless—he hoped he would never forget the houseless. And he never did.

I think the great French critic was right when he said recently that among the causes that have saved England from the wave of revolution, the kindliness of Charles Dickens was one of the great moral forces.

I really believe that to be true, not perhaps entirely as manifested in Charles Dickens himself, but that something which is in the British character if it may be allowed to come out, which Dickens helped to come out. I think it has saved this country from many of the terrors which have been met with on the Continent.

How are we to reconcile the statement of many superior critics at the present day who say that he was a mere sentimentalist—with the accomplishment of so many social reforms; the suggestion that he was a caricaturist who could not write seriously—with the fact that he has moved more hearts by his writing than anyone else, and in the truest sense was a master of compassion.

I think the voice that would speak most clearly for Dickens, and always will speak for Dickens, is one of his own characters who I am sure must have been a real person in his life, and one only hopes that Providence was merciful enough to let him meet her when he most needed it in those early days, the kind old Nurse Peggotty, who said, when he was taking leave of her: "There is a little room that will always be kept for you. Young or old, as long as I am alive and have this house over my head, you shall find it as if I expected you here directly this minute. I shall keep it every day, as I used to keep your old little room, my darling; and if you was to go to China you might think of it as being kept just the same, all the time you were away."

It is a very difficult thing for any but a master of literature to write with that exquisite sympathy, that exquisite sincerity, and that musical undertone which made him, as Oliver Wendell Holmes said, the prose minstrel of our day.

That musical undertone comes out again and again, sometimes in deeper ways. You will find it in one of those stories which should interest Portsmouth particularly, *The Wreck of the Golden Mary*, where in their last desperate straits, the men in one boat held up a little child to encourage the men in the other boat.

They see it at a distance like a little white bird, and it gives them hope and encouragement, and there is a very curious allegory in it which suggests that the holding up of that little child somehow reminds them of the real values in the Universe, that there is something which looks after those values.

It doesn't say very much about it, but it is held up almost as a symbol of the Divine Child, and you will remember that when the child dies, he uses those words that are perhaps the greatest ever uttered by any lips on earth.

He makes the captain use them in committing the little body to the sea. He cannot remember many of the prayers, but he does remember the Lord's Prayer; and he remembers these words: "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

Those words are not natural words; they are supernatural words. They can only come from the centre. And he uses them again in what has been called the greatest use of a quotation ever made in English, and that is at the end of *A Tale of Two Cities*. You remember how Sydney Carton, knowing he is going to give up his life, hears these words echoing again and again through his mind. He drags them up out of his memory like a great ship's anchor—that is the operative word, the anchor which our civilisation is in danger of losing—and it is with those words he goes on to the scaffold.

Well, all through Dickens's life you have that love of little children which again is characteristic of the master of compassion. Here and there, there are passages which are not of this time. Moods change, and ways of expressing them also change, but I do not think you can call it weakly sentimentality.

Remember that Mrs. Carlyle said that Dickens's face looked as if it was made of steel, though light and motion flashed from every part of it. The steel in Dickens has often been overlooked, but it is there. You have only to read some of his opinions on capital punishment, when he points out how weak sentiment is wasted on the murderer, while the victim is completely forgotten.

If you read that paper you will see that Dickens had a great many lessons to teach our supposedly more cynical or apparently stronger present-day age. How that love of little children which shines through his work is probably derived from his own boyhood, yet in spite of the hardships he endured there was never any bitterness. Never do you find a trace of the bitterness which seems to thrive in the more prosperous circumstances of the present day. You will find a strenuous effort to make things better, but you will find nothing but love and compassion, that made him a true follower of the Divine Master of Compassion.

Long after his death his personal inspiration survived when the little house in Somers Town in which he lived was turned into a children's library. From the children's library there, branches were established all over the world, so that where he used as a small boy to steal up to the attic and read books surreptitiously, children all over the world can now be gathered in to read of their own free will.

For the performance given on that occasion for the benefit of that library I wrote an Epilogue which I should like to give you

here to-night, because it seems to me that although it was written of the little house in Somers Town there are glimpses of Portsmouth through the windows, so to speak:

EPILOGUE

There was no way out except the garret
At the top of that small, dark house
A glory hole for dusty books and boxes
A haunt of the spider and the mouse.

But he crept up the stair, bare footed
Like a lonely little thief in the night
Through the creakings and the slumber-heavy breathings
Till he stood there in a ring of candlelight.

Though his elders thought that attics led to nowhere,
He had dreamed—could the dream be true?
Of a trap-door somewhere in the darkness
That a boy might scramble through.

And a treasure that was hidden very deeply
From the day where the good dreams died;
His elders had not found it, was it buried
In the things they had thrown aside?

There were worlds in the balance as he doubted
Was it worth-while looking, should he go?
Then he saw, at his feet, an old worm-eaten
Book, and that name, Defoe.

And he sat him down among the tattered volumes
With one foot under him curled
His dark eyes blazed above the pages
And he woke, in a great new world.

The night was grim, and dark, and growing darker
He sat there, stiller than a stone:
A small boy reading in a garret,
A great king, seated on a throne.

* * * * *

Was it lonely in the Abbey where they laid him
When the dream had all come true?
Would a shadow hunt again for hidden treasure
In the house that his boyhood knew?

For he stole like a shadow up the dark street
And there, through a window he could see
Not a room, but a harbour bright with lanterns
And tall ships casting from the quay.

To every ship a watchman in the crow's nest
With one foot under him curled
And a crew of urchins crowding on the canvas
For adventure to the ends of the world.

They were skippered by the hawk-eyed Cooper
  And the Missisippi King, Mark Twain
And a lean Samoan Scot named Robert Louis
  Full-sail to the South again.

And Defoe still dreaming of his island
  With that strangely single footprint on the sand;
There were great ships, rolling down to Rio
  And wings, for the Never Never Land.

And the shadow at the window stood and wondered
  Oh, who can the harbour-master be?
For his pilot-lights are shining on the waters
  As they never shone for me.

Then he saw a crooked stair behind the harbour
  He stole through the open door
And climbed to a little room and entered
  Like a thief in the night once more.

It was narrow as his house in the Abbey
  It was dim with smiles and tears
And he groped for the master of the dream-ships
  Through the mists of a hundred years.

He groped there, silent as a shadow,
  For he saw him stiller than a stone;
A small boy, reading in a garret,
  A great King, seated on a throne.

In proposing the Toast of The City of Portsmouth, Mrs. H. E. Evans, Past President of the Manchester Branch, referred to the foresight of the city fathers in purchasing the Dickens Birthplace in 1903, and to the vigour with which municipal projects are carried out to-day. The Lord Mayor in his reply expressed his belief that the housing problem of the city would be solved in a few years, and that the Town Hall would be restored, following its war-time destruction, in about three years. He cordially invited the Fellowship to hold its Conference again in Portsmouth, promising that the Town Hall would then be at its disposal.

The Toast of The Dickens Fellowship was proposed by the Provost, the Very Rev. E. N. Porter-Goff, M.A., who stated that Dickens was the instigator and inspiration of the social revolution, the culmination of which had come in our own time. Mrs. Jane Bacon, Chairman of Council, replied. She recalled that the Fellowship grew out of a suggestion contained in a letter signed "A Working Man," but that during its fifty years it had appealed to all classes of society, many of whom appealed to it –for advice. Some of them even took it!

"The Visitors" was the subject of a Toast by Mr. W. W. Hide, Vice-President of the Portsmouth Branch, to which the Lady Mayoress briefly replied.

The Portsmouth Branch was proposed by the Hon. Editor of *The Dickensian* who complimented the Branch upon its sturdy

growth since its re-formation after the Second World War, its remarkable success with its competitions for recitals from the works of Dickens, and upon the success of the present Conference, attended by nearly two hundred members from all over the country and from overseas. All this could not have been achieved, said Mr. Staples, but for Branch Officers of fine quality. The Vice-Chairman of the Branch, Mrs. W. W. Hide, replied, and referred to the valuable work carried out by the Branch among sick children.

During the evening, Mr. V. C. Clinton-Baddeley read a passage from *Nicholas Nickleby*, having reference to the Portsmouth triumphs of Vincent Crummles, and the First Quarter of *The Chimes* was recited by Mrs. Norah Hurrell.

The visitors did not meet again till the following afternoon when glorious sunshine favoured them for a most interesting cruise in Portsmouth Harbour, for which permission had been secured to enter the dock in which was moored H.M.S. *Britannia* which had but recently brought home H.M. the Queen from her World Tour. In the evening a special Service at Portsmouth Cathedral was attended by a very large number of members attending Conference. The music was especially noteworthy and a fine sermon was preached by the Provost, the Very Rev. E. N. Porter-Goff, M.A. Afterwards there was a gathering at Kimbel's Restaurant when a number of members entertained the company. There was an opportunity during the evening to hear a characteristic recital from Mr. John Greaves, Hon. General Secretary.

The final day of the Conference, Monday, May 31st, was occupied by a coach tour of the Isle of Wight which looked its best in the brilliant sunshine. The high-light of the day was a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Noyes, an invitation extended to the party at the Dinner two days before. Their beautiful garden was greatly admired and the examination of the many treasures of their delightful home occupied the visitors for some considerable time. At tea in Newport, the last occasion on which the party met together, Mr. Greaves took the opportunity of expressing everyone's thanks for the excellent arrangements made for the comfort and convenience of members of the Conference, and for the smoothness with which they had been carried through. In particular he mentioned the name of Portsmouth's popular Hon. Secretary, Mrs. D. Stock.

BOOK FOR STUDY

SEASON 1954-5:

NICHOLAS NICKLEBY

GRANDFATHER THOMSON

By Andrew Paterson

APRIL 3rd of this year (1954) marked the centenary of the death of Professor John Wilson of Edinburgh, better known as Christopher North, who was one of the brilliant group of Scottish critics and reviewers, who dominated the literary world in the early years of last century.

To Dickensians Professor Wilson is worthy of note as he was Chairman at the historic banquet given at Edinburgh in 1841 in honour of the young author of Pickwick, who at the time was only 29 years of age. The enthusiasm with which young Dickens was greeted on that occasion ranks second only to the applause with which Scotland's own favourite son, Robert Burns, was welcomed to Edinburgh some 55 years earlier.

Now there are certain circumstances associated with that reception to Dickens that have long intrigued and puzzled me. Why should the Scots have waxed so enthusiastic over the creator of Pickwick? Was he not an Englishman, and at that time the prejudice against the English was still remarkably strong north of the Border? Further, those critics, particularly Wilson, who acclaimed him so enthusiastically, were they not the men who had scoffed at The Cockney School of Poetry? Yet here they were rivalling each other to do honour to this young author, whose theme was largely London and the curious characters to be found in her streets. Nor had he written anything to rouse the patriotic fervour of the Scots. Indeed, the only reference to Scotland in his writings so far was contained in the "Story of the Bagman's Uncle" in *Pickwick*. True, that brief sketch is notable for its humorous description of Scottish hospitality and its graphic pictures of Edinburgh by night, but these were not sufficient to excite the extraordinary scenes with which Dickens was welcomed to the Scottish capital.

What then could be the reason?

Probably the answer is to be found in the fact that in Edinburgh at the time *Pickwick* was being published, there was a notable citizen, George Thomson, who was held in high esteem by the Scottish public, and by the good citizens of Edinburgh in particular. Had he not encouraged Burns to write lyrics to the number of 120 for the old Scottish airs, which he, Thomson, was about to publish and thus rescue from oblivion? Anyone who knows how highly the Scots venerate their National Bard will understand why the man, who should thus have been associated with Burns, would enjoy their special esteem.

Now George Thomson is of interest to Dickensians, for it was his granddaughter, Catherine Hogarth, whom young Dickens married in 1836, following publication of the first number of *Pickwick Papers*.

Surely it is not too much to deduce that Grandfather Thomson, the man who had the entry into the most influential literary circles, would not miss the opportunity to make this relationship known to the critics of the day, and we can easily imagine that these critics on reading the early issues of *Pickwick*, and recognising

the genius of the young author, would not hesitate to give him a special boost to please the old Grandfather.

Of course, this explanation is only conjecture on my part, but without some such explanation it is difficult to understand why the Scots of over a hundred years ago, should have led the whole English-speaking world in its appreciation of Dickens.

From the Dickens House Collection

While on this subject, there is another point I might mention. As Dickensians know, George Hogarth, Thomson's son-in-law and father of Mrs. Dickens, was one of the first to recognise the genius of Boz. However, it is interesting to read that he appears to have regarded the young man more as a poet than as a prose writer, for we are told he took verses written by Dickens, "a very promising young writer," to Henry Russell, the composer, to have them set to music. Did Hogarth seek to emulate his father-in-law, who had found fame by inducing Scotland's National Bard to write lyrics? Did he think he had discovered another Burns in Dickens? Happily Dickens recognised that his future lay not in versifying, but in writing graphic, picturesque prose which speedily brought him to the front rank of British authors.

It may be added that after 1838 Grandfather Thomson spent his latter years between Edinburgh and London. He died at Leith in 1851 at the advanced age of ninety-two, and was buried at Kensal Green Cemetery, London.

RECENT DICKENSIANA

Novels of the Eighteen-Forties, Kathleen Tillotson, Geoffrey Cumberlege, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 21*s*.

Readings from Dickens, arr. by Emlyn Williams. Heinemann, 10*s*. 6*d*.

Speaking of Books, J. Donald Adams. *New York Times Book Review*, 1st November, 1953.

Structural Patterns in Dickens's "Great Expectations." *English Literary History*, March, 1954.

The Humour of Charles Dickens, V. S. Pritchett, *The Listener*, June 3rd.

In Search of Squeers, V. C. Clinton Baddeley. *John o' London's Weekly*, July 23rd.

CONTEMPORARY PICTURES OF DICKENS'S LONDON

By Gwen Major

AN outstanding exhibition of very great interest, consisting of water-colour drawings of the London of Dickens's day, has been opened this summer at the London Museum, which now finds itself once more at Kensington Palace.

It was in 1933 that the Museum acquired some forty drawings by J. L. Stewart, an artist working in London from about 1850 until after the death of Dickens. The object of these drawings was to link the scenes with the stories, each being labelled, the artist in some cases painting Dickens's fictitious names upon buildings. Stewart seldom had to reconstruct; as the books appeared he could compare the novelist's descriptions with the houses, streets, courts, and alleys that Dickens could have looked upon, and probably did, only shortly before. There is no evidence that Stewart knew Dickens, or that the latter had any knowledge of Stewart's work, although one feels that such a series must have been exhibited somewhere, or was in some way brought to Dickens's notice.

The drawings are excellent, often charming, and if sometimes "architectooralooral," they are therefore more likely to be correct. The artist's work has also appeared at Guildhall and at Bishopsgate Institute.

The Assistant Keeper at the London Museum, Mr. Bryan W. Spencer, has taken an immense amount of trouble to make this exhibition representative of the times, indeed to make it conjure up the Dickens scene.

To the drawings by Stewart have been added those of other artists depicting the same period. While Stewart's work is displayed around the walls, the others are arranged on screens to illustrate such subjects as transport, markets, prisons, pleasure-gardens and the like, while several large paintings in oils add variety yet emphasise the unity of the theme.

Quotations from Dickens have been as carefully selected for each exhibit, not only those already linked by Stewart to passages in the books, but for those illustrating localities with which Dickens dealt more broadly. The pictures are delightfully presented, in tasteful mounts and frames.

Dickensians will feel grateful to the London Museum for this feast of good things, especially to Mr. Spencer who clearly has an exceptional feeling for the period, and who has taken much time and care to ensure accuracy. One feels, too, that such a fascinating display cannot fail to bring new readers to Dickens.

THE LATE T. W. HILL

The twenty books bequeathed to the Dickens Fellowship, to be selected from his library by the Editor of *The Dickensian*, and sold for the benefit of the Fellowship's funds, realised £32 0s. 0d.

A RE-EXAMINATION OF *EDWIN DROOD*

By William W. Bleifuss
Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri.

(*Continued from page* 115)

II

Edwin Drood, then, was not a new start for Dickens, but very probably a novel that was to conform to an already established pattern. The next problem to consider is the fate of Edwin. Was he murdered that fateful Christmas eve or was he to reappear at the end of the novel?

If we keep in mind the general moral and literary principles that Dickens followed, we see that the twenty-three extant chapters indicate that Edwin was not murdered. Dickens did not reveal what happened to Edwin because by holding back this information he increased the suspense. But before examining Dickens's literary and moral principles and the text itself to find support for my position, we shall look at the evidence used to justify the belief that Edwin was murdered.

Four people, John Forster, Charles Dickens the younger, Mrs. Perugini (Kate Dickens), and Sir Luke Fildes, the illustrator of the novel, have expressed their belief that Edwin was killed by his uncle.

In his biography Forster reported that Dickens told him he had undertaken a very difficult problem in *Edwin Drood*. He did not, however, disclose what this problem was and Forster did not presume to guess. Forster then added that he learned "immediately afterward" the story "was to be that of the murder of a nephew by his uncle." The gold ring was to be used to identify the body; Jasper was to review his career at the end of the book; Rosa was to marry Tartar; Helena was to marry Mr. Crisparkle. "So much," said Forster, "was told to me before any of the book was written."[1]

Forster's statements, we must also remember, are hearsay evidence written after he had read the twenty-three completed chapters and written by a man anxious to show the world that he was the novelist's best and most devoted friend. To admit that he did not know what was to happen in the unfinished novel would be to suggest that he was not in the confidence of Dickens. Forster might pretend that he knew what would happen in the last half of the novel; he also might have come to his own conclusions.

All of these disclosures to Forster were made in July and early August, 1869, at a time when Dickens had not yet begun to write his novel and was only contemplating its contents. By the time he started it is probable that he must have amended his plot, but he did not wish to divulge his change in plans to anyone, including Forster. As we know, he changed or introduced important plot elements in such books as *Pickwick Papers*, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, *Dombey and Son*, *Bleak House*, and *Great Expectations* after he had started publication. Perhaps in

[1] *The Life of Charles Dickens*, ed. J. W. T. Ley (New York, 1928), p. 808.

early August he did consider the possibility of having Jasper murder Edwin, but as he developed his story he realised that it would be better to keep Edwin alive; and certainly his dramatisation of the young man's story indicates that he was not suddenly to be erased by his scheming uncle.

Examination of the correspondence between the two men and of the relevant passages in the biography suggests that Dickens found Forster a valuable proof-reader, a conservative literary critic, and a good judge of public taste; yet these same sources reveal that Dickens did not often consult his friend when he needed ideas. Forster would now and then help choose titles and would recommend changes, but he was most useful as a business agent. There is good evidence, also, that Dickens by 1869-70 no longer considered Forster so indispensable a friend. He wrote fewer and fewer letters to his literary adviser as the years passed.[1] Though Forster assured the world he knew the proposed plot of *Edwin Drood*, Wilkie Collins, probably the novelist's closest friend at the time of his death, stated flatly that he had no idea what the ending would have been and he would not presume to write one.

Interestingly enough neither Charles Dickens the younger nor Sir Luke Fildes revealed anything that would indicate either possessed any more important information about the plot than Forster reported he knew in the summer of 1869. Charles the younger, with whom the novelist was not particularly close, largely because of the son's loyalty to his mother and an unpopular marriage, corroborated Forster in part. In conjunction with Joseph Hatton, the son wrote a play based on the novel. The drama, which never was staged by the two men, contains a scene depicting Jasper's murder of his nephew and ends with the uncle's suicide by poison. The man of mystery, Datchery, does not once appear. The inept play has no literary merit and is far from the novel in many respects, though the early scenes were lifted from the book. Still Joseph Hatton stated that Charles the younger told him that his father had revealed enough of the plot to "clearly indicate how the story was to end."[2] The garbled account suggests that the son was presuming to know more than he did. The dramatic version goes far to diminish in importance Mrs. Perugini's evidence that her brother "positively declared that he had heard from his father's lips that Drood was dead."[3]

In his introduction to an edition of *Edwin Drood*, Charles the younger quoted his father's words in order to suggest that his record of a conversation that took place more than twenty years earlier is reliable testimony as to what the novelist intended:

> . . . my father asked me if I did not think that he had let out too much of his story too soon. I assented and added: "Of

[1] Three recent biographers of Dickens, Una Pope-Hennessey, Hesketh Pearson, and Jack Lindsay, though differing in their estimation of the novelist, agree that Forster was opinionated, reserved, jealous of anyone who came between him and Dickens, and anxious to assert his own importance. They refer to contemporary reports, the most notable being that the egotistical Podsnap in *Our Mutual Friend* was based on Forster.

[2] W. Robertson Nicoll, *The Problem of Edwin Drood* (New York, 1912), pp. 122-123.

[3] "Edwin Drood and Dickens's Last Days," *Pall Mall Magazine* (June, 1906), quoted by Nicoll, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

course, Edwin Drood was murdered ? " Whereupon he turned upon me with an expression of astonishment at my having asked such an unnecessary question, and said: " Of course; what else did you suppose ? "[1]

We could hardly expect anything else from Dickens's son, for he had already committed himself in his play to the belief that Edwin was murdered. Though Dickens may have said these or similar words to his son, he might also have been playing a joke on the youth. Perhaps he declined to correct him both for fear of embarrassing him because he had not been a careful reader and, in the second place, which is more likely, because he did not want to reveal his intentions.

Mrs. Perugini has said that Forster was somewhat fussy and exacting and believed that her father in later years treated him condescendingly; nevertheless she thought that the biographer's remarks about *Edwin Drood* were trustworthy. She recalled, however, that Georgina Hogarth, her aunt and her father's beloved sister-in-law, said that in reply to her question about the fate of Edwin, he answered, " I call the book the Mystery, not the History, of Edwin Drood."[2] If Dickens were unwilling to commit himself to Georgina Hogarth, who was much closer and dearer to him than any of his children and was certainly a more honored friend than either Forster or Sir Luke Fildes, it is unlikely that he would be ready to impart important secrets about the plot to anyone else.

Dickens's daughter also disclosed that her father was loath to talk about the book or reveal any of his plans to his friends or family. She stated that her first husband, Charles A. Collins, who designed the green cover for the monthly issues of the novel, knew nothing about the plot: " [He] was not in possession of my father's secret, although he had made his designs from my father's directions."[3]

The cryptic remark that Dickens made to Miss Hogarth is no less ambiguous than the statements that Sir Luke Fildes declared that Dickens made to him. Fildes, in an article written more than thirty-five years after the conversation took place, noted that Dickens, after asking him to keep his secret, said that he must have a double necktie in an illustration " for Jasper strangles Edwin Drood with it."[4] Fildes pretended he was recording the conversation as it happened, though it is doubtful he should remember so precisely what at the time must have been only a small problem. The illustrator, when he made his comments, like Forster, was on the defensive, for his reputation and association with Dickens had been questioned by a reviewer writing for the *Times Literary Supplement* (October 27, 1905):

Nor do we attach much importance to any of the hints Dickens dropped, whether to John Forster, to any member of his family, or to either of his illustrators. He was very anxious

[1] " Introduction," *Edwin Drood*, quoted by Richard M. Baker, *The Drood Murder Case* (Berkeley, California, 1951), p. 7.

[2] Quoted by Nicoll, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-53.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 39. Gladys Storey (*Dickens and Daughter* London, 1939], p. 130) noted that Dickens was " particularly careful not to divulge [to Luke Fildes more of the story than was necessary to the execution of the drawing in hand." The source of this information is Mrs. Perugini.

[4] " Letter to the *Times*," *Times Literary Supplement*, November 3, 1905.

that his secret should not be guessed, and the hints which he dropped may very well have been intentionally misleading. Fildes angrily declared that Dickens would not have presumed to mislead him. But to-day there is little need for giving the illustrator this sop to his vanity. There is no reason why Dickens should disclose an important literary secret to a man who was not a good friend, for Fildes was chosen to illustrate the novel on the recommendation of the painter John Millais, who was himself not well acquainted with the artist, though he had seen some of the man's work in *The Graphic*.

Dickens's reticence about his writings bears out the supposition of the unknown *Times* reviewer whose article aroused Fildes's ire and nipped his vanity. When Dickens wanted advice, he would ask for it, but he was less gracious when unsolicited advice was offered. A few times he changed a prepared number on the recommendation of those who read the proofs, for he was especially sensitive to what his reading public would want.[1] It is likely that he would consider *Edwin Drood* too precious a book, too full of mysteries to be discussed openly even with his friends. Why should he have disclosed his plans when in a few months the whole novel, he had every reason to believe, would be completed for everyone to look at? His firm control of his characters and plots in his novels is especially evident in his last book; conferences with friends would not be needed. Consequently we still are left with the question of whether Edwin was murdered or merely "in hiding."

The statements by his biographer, his son, his daughter, and his illustrator are based on their interpretation of his intentions; they give us comments that were edited to fit the impressions already in their minds.

Others who insist that Edwin was murdered point to Dickens's notes for his novel, notes that contain the word "murder." For Chapter II, Dickens wrote "Murder very far off." For Chapter XII, "A Night With Durdles," he wrote: "Lay the ground for the manner of the murder to come out at last." The use of this word does not mean that the murder was committed later in the novel, but that Jasper was to reveal his plot and that the reader was to know how the proposed slaying was to take place. Therefore we have the detailed scene in the cathedral in Chapter XII so that the reader will better understand Jasper's plans. The note does not imply that Jasper was to succeed. Furthermore Dickens in writing these brief notes for himself may have been using a short simple word to stand for what was in his mind but was not easy to express briefly. Stephen Leacock made the useful suggestion that Dickens wrote "Lay the ground for the manner of the murder to come out at last" as a short and easy form of "Lay the ground for the manner of the attempted-murder-which-apparently-is-a-murder-till-the-sequel-discloses-it-not-to-be-one, to come out at last."[2] And whether Edwin was murdered or not, it is important that we know in detail Jasper's plan of action.

[1] In *Dombey and Son* Dickens yielded to the recommendation of Lord Francis Jeffrey and did not permit Edith Dombey to become Carker's mistress. He also yielded to Bulwer's plea that he permit Pip and Estella to meet again at the end of *Great Expectations*.

[2] *Charles Dickens* (New York, 1936), p. 297.

Dickens perhaps wrote a note to remind himself that he should disclose part of this plan to his readers in Chapter XII.

We have reviewed the evidence favoring the belief that Edwin was murdered. It should be noted that this evidence is external, and consists largely of statements from Dickens's friends. The statements are not very convincing, as we have seen. We must remember, too, that his great interest in keeping his plot a secret suggests that he did not disclose his final plans to anyone.

When we examine the novel we find that there is little in the twenty-three chapters that allows us to infer that Edwin has been murdered. Furthermore Dickens's customary literary practice and moral disposition indicate strongly that Edwin was not killed. For one thing Dickens does nothing to prepare the reader for the young man's death; neither does he provide any moral justification for the death, for it is clear that Edwin does not deserve to die. His suggestion of a romance between Helena and Edwin and his interest in Edwin's development as a human being are pointless plot elements if he is murdered. The elaborate attention given to Jasper's plans, the careful analysis of Mr. Grewgious's behavior, and the handling of the opium woman provide more reasons for thinking Edwin was not killed. The sketches on the green cover and the list of titles are not explainable unless Edwin was to live. Furthermore the subordinate opium and ring plots are more meaningful if we assume that Edwin is alive. But each of these reasons deserves detailed attention.

Dickens's elaborate preparation for the deaths of such characters as Little Nell, Paul Dombey, Richard Carstone, and Sydney Carton is noted by every observant reader. He planned that they should die at the appropriate time; their deeds, their words, their thoughts, and the action offer but one possibility. In the case of Nell and the two men, death comes both as a climax and a victory, for Dickens wants to reconcile his readers to the pathos of the situation by making death purposeful. Little Nell is too good for the harsh world she encounters; she does her best to complete her journey, parallel in so many ways to Christian's journey in *Pilgrim's Progress*, but falls by the wayside and dies. Dickens implies that the world is not worthy of such an angel. Carstone is broken by the involved and tortuous *Jarndyce* and *Jarndyce* suit, but at the end he sees his error in letting the suit dominate his thoughts; Carton is glad to sacrifice his life for his beloved Lucy. In *Edwin Drood*, however, there is nothing to parallel the many signposts pointing to death in *The Old Curiosity Shop, Dombey and Son, Bleak House,* and *A Tale of Two Cities.* Instead young Edwin is a youth growing up, experiencing life with all its enigmas and frustrations; his mission, it seems, is to complete his education, rid himself of his faults, and become the reformed young hero whom we have seen earlier in such characters as Eugene Wrayburn, Pip, David Copperfield and young Martin Chuzzlewit.

If Edwin were to be murdered, then Dickens would be doing something that he had never done before: countenancing violence without sufficient reason. Ordinarily life is too precious to Dickens for him to destroy it recklessly. With the exception of *A Tale of Two Cities,* where special historical circumstances prevail, in no

one of his major writings is an innocent person wantonly killed. Murder and violence for their own sake are not exploited by Dickens; he was too close to his times, too ready to accept conventional morality to treat murder without trepidation. If someone is killed in his novels, that person has merited destruction; violent death does not come by caprice to Nancy in *Oliver Twist*, to Mr. Tulkinghorn in *Bleak House*, to Mr. Merdle in *Little Dorrit*, or to Magwitch in *Great Expectations*. Each of these persons has erred, has sinned against society or against individuals, and in Dickens's account book merits death. He even justifies on moral grounds the carnage in *Barnaby Rudge* and *A Tale of Two Cities*.

Similarly ordinary deaths in his writings are not without moral significance, for life and death are not meaningless. There is a purpose for everything; and his love of melodrama only partially explains the development of his plots. For example, Paul Dombey dies, not because he is evil or because he is too good to live, but because his death is an object lesson for his father who selfishly has tried to corner not only money but life itself.

To blot out Edwin before he has done anything to deserve death or without his death's affecting anyone morally is for Dickens to make a complete and decisive break with the moral position that he upholds in his other novels. To have murder just for the sake of murder is so abrupt a departure from his usual practice that to accept it is to assent also to what is hardest to accept, a complete change in Dickens's moral standards. And since this is almost inconceivable, we are left with the alternative that Edwin was not to be murdered but unknown to Jasper was to live.

Furthermore, to kill off Edwin would be to rob Helena of a very eligible suitor. It makes meaningless the passages in the novel where Dickens hints at an incipient romance between the two. Meeting Helena has been one of the reasons why Edwin has broken off with his betrothed. Almost facetious is the statement that " Edwin Drood is already enough impressed with Helena, to feel indignant that Helena's brother (far below her) should dispose of him so coolly . . ." (Chapter VIII). When he breaks off with Rosa, we are told that " he did already entertain some wandering speculations whether it might ever come to pass that he would know more of Miss Landless." (Chapter XIII). Dickens carefully noted that Edwin did not tell Rosa of his interest in her new friend. Stephen Leacock was right when he felt that Dickens would be displaying " pointless " and " execrable " taste if he had had Edwin murdered just after we have been told that all during his talk with Rosa " the vanity and caprice of youth sustain that handsome figure of Miss Landless in the background of his mind." (Chapter XIII.) Assuming that Edwin was to come back, perhaps Dickens meant to have Helena return his affection, though there is evidence that she is attracted to Mr. Crisparkle. A second failure to secure a sweetheart would be for Edwin another part of his education, one more trial he would have to undergo in his effort to find himself.

Though Edwin needs to reform, for he is a bit selfish and headstrong, he is by no means as despicable and deserving of death

as some critics would have us believe. Richard M. Baker found that " there is really very little about Edwin to endear him to us, or to cause any degree of anguish when he disappears . . ."[1] To J. Cuming Walters, Edwin was " little more than a name-label attached to a boy, a man who never excites sympathy, and whose fate causes no emotion."[2] In the quarrel scene Dickens clearly indicated that Edwin is not nearly as violent as Neville is; in his conversations with Rosa Bud, he is far better tempered and agreeable than his petulant, unpredictable sweetheart, whose reproaches about his behavior to her are not substantiated by his conduct when he is with her.

In the course of the first fourteen chapters, when he is before the reader far more than any other character except his uncle, Jasper, Edwin's feelings, hopes, anxieties, and plans are carefully revealed. For Dickens to give such elaborate attention to the mind and character of a person who is to be murdered and who will no longer influence anyone else in the story would be ridiculous. Unless Edwin were to return to Cloisterham later on, there is no justification for Dickens's careful build-up of the man and his elaborate attention to the faltering romance.

To support my belief that Edwin was not to die is the detailed attention Dickens gives to Jasper's plans for the death and disappearance of his cousin. As Stephen Leacock wrote in his account of the novel, " the trouble with the Drood murder is that there is too much of it."[3] That Jasper should plan so carefully and apparently carry out his plans successfully, to all appearances, is just the reason why it is dramatically and ironically right that he should fail. Dickens often has the well-laid plans of his villainous characters fail, as in the case of the Defarges, Bradley Headstone, Jonas Chuzzlewit, and Ralph Nickleby. We may safely assume that an opium dream or hallucination has somehow confused Jasper and made him unaware of his failure.

What happens to Edwin is disclosed by the text, which reveals that the young man has been preparing to depart for Egypt. Even before he and Rosa think of calling off their unsatisfactory alliance, we find that he thinks he will leave for Egypt the next summer and be away " for many a long day." (Chapter VIII). In his last interview he tells her he plans to see Mr. Grewgious when the latter comes down to see her at her request; he then adds that he will be " flitting soon." (Chapter XIII). We are told by Dickens that Edwin " only waits for Mr. Grewgious now, and will depart immediately after having seen him." (Chapter XIV). On the afternoon of the dinner he looks around the town wistfully, for " he will soon be far away." Is it not probable that he sees Mr. Grewgious late that night—after the dinner party and after leaving Jasper's gatehouse —and departs for Egypt before he and the family lawyer know that he supposedly has disappeared and is believed dead ? Therefore it is possible to assume that Jasper, because of a hallucination brought about through opium, believes he has successfully murdered Edwin; after all, he has secured the watch and the shirt-pin. At least three passages in the book

[1] *Op. Cit.*, p. 7.
[2] Quoted by Nicoll, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-123.
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 297.

disclose that the choirmaster suffers fits and loss of consciousness from the use of the drug.

Dickens's changes in his manuscript give further proof that he was planning to keep his hero alive. As originally written the following passage in Chapter XIV reads:

> His wonted carelessness is replaced by a wistful looking at, and dwelling upon, all the old landmarks. He will soon be far away, and may never see them again, he thinks. Ah, he little knows how near a case he has for thinking so.

In editing his copy, Dickens struck out the last sentence, which clearly indicates that he will return. He replaced it with " Poor youth ! Poor youth ! " which leaves the situation ambiguous.

Another reason for supposing that Edwin is alive is the behavior of Mr. Grewgious, who acts as though he knows much more than he is willing to disclose to anyone. This is apparent during the conversation he has with Jasper very soon after the disappearance. Can we not assume that Mr. Grewgious notes at once discrepancies between the story Jasper tells and what we can suppose he knows from his conversation with Edwin, who has by this time left the country ? Mr. Grewgious is suspicious because of the choirmaster's story and behavior, but he wisely keeps his information to himself. He does, however, mention that Rosa and Edwin have broken their engagement and callously notes the effect of the news on Jasper. The lawyer knows of the broken engagement, though we are not told how he heard about it. We know, however, that Edwin had planned to have the lawyer tell Jasper this news. (Chapter XIII). Mr. Grewgious's remarks to Jasper during their first meeting since the dinner party reveal almost beyond doubt that Edwin has seen the lawyer since the breaking of the engagement:

> " One of this young couple, and that one your nephew, fearful, however, that in the tenderness of your affection for him you would be bitterly disappointed by so wide a departure from his projected life, forbore to tell you the secret, for a few days, and left it to be disclosed by me, when I should come down to speak to you, and he would be gone. I speak to you, and he is gone." (Chapter XV.)

The source of the lawyer's information seems to be not Rosa, but Edwin.

I think that it is not impossible to assume that Mr. Grewgious has the ring; the solemn promise that Edwin makes to him about returning the ring if he does not give it to Rosa is emphasised by Dickens. The special attention to this part of the conversation between the two men in Chapter XI is understandable only as part of the novelist's preparation for another meeting between them when Edwin would have the opportunity to tell the lawyer about both the agreement he and Rosa have come to and Jasper's behavior after the fateful dinner party. But this latter point is only speculation. Though it is clear that the ring means a great deal to Mr. Grewgious and is important to the story, the lawyer does not once refer to it after giving it to Edwin; nor does Dickens mention it after Chapter XIV. The lawyer's passionate admonition

to Edwin suggests that the older man would never give up searching for the priceless memento of the woman he once loved unless he knew the ring were safe. It would be safe only if Edwin had had a chance to return it after the dinner party at the gatehouse and before his departure for Egypt.

Dickens's choice of a title for Chapter XIV is another reason for believing that Edwin is to reappear in the book. It would have been pointless for Dickens to paraphrase from *Macbeth* the words "When shall these three meet again?" unless he planned to have another meeting.

Similarly it is unlikely that Dickens would devote three pages to a conversation between Edwin and the opium woman unless that conversation were going to be important to the story. The woman learns nothing from Edwin that can possibly affect the story, but he learns much from her and he broods for a long time over her remarks. Her conversation "holds to him," and the "woman's words are in the rising wind, in the angry sky, in the troubled water, in the flickering light." (Chapter XIV.) Dickens is here resorting to a favorite stylistic trick, his identification of man's words and actions with nature's. Having Edwin die after this scene would be comparable to having Magwitch in *Great Expectations* vanish forever after the first few chapters, never to return and never to influence the lives of the other characters.

Another packet of evidence to support the theory that Edwin does not die is the middle picture at the bottom of the green cover for the monthly instalments. Jasper, we can assume, is one of the two men in the scene, the figure on the right. The expression on his face indicates that the sight of the other figure, motionless, unflurried, is an unpleasant surprise. The sight of Edwin, the man Jasper thinks is dead, could account for his reaction. My suggestion does not rule out some other scene that was to be disclosed in the last half of the book; it is only to fulfil the expectation that the extant half of the novel gives.

More evidence that supports the theory that Edwin was not to be murdered is the list of titles that Dickens considered. Not one of the seventeen titles suggests murder, but almost all hint at first a disappearance and then a reappearance. The list, left among the author's notes for his novel, is difficult to explain away if we assume that Edwin is murdered.[1]

Two plot elements are best accounted for by the theory that Edwin is not dead. The first is built around the many allusions to opium, its effect on Jasper, and the presence of the old opium woman. The second plot element involves the ring which Mr. Grewgious gives to Edwin.

Why bring in the old opium woman if Edwin is dead? Perhaps she was to worm out the secrets that torment Jasper, secrets which are referred to in the opium den scene in Chapter XIII and which arouse the old woman's interest. She was probably destined to disclose what she knows to Datchery. But Jasper is already

[1] Dickens proposed the following seventeen titles for his novel: The Loss of James Wakefield; James's Disappearance; Flight and Pursuit; Sworn to Avenge It; One Object in Life; A Kinsman's Devotion; The Two Kinsmen; The Loss of Edwin Brood; The Loss of Edwin Brude; The Mystery in the Drood Family; The Loss of Edwin Drood; The Flight of Edwin Drood; Edwin Drood in Hiding; The Loss of Edwin Drude; The Disappearance of Edwin Drood; The Mystery of Edwin Drood; Dead? or Alive?

under suspicion, and we do not need the old woman to help that part of the plot along. Jasper, of course, reveals more than he intends to while under the influence of opium. The old woman gives him just enough to make him talk but remain unaware that he is saying more than he should. But the important thing about opium is that it induces visions and dreams; Jasper tells us that while under the influence of opium he has many times visualised Edwin's destruction. He incautiously tells the opium woman enough to make her suspicious and the reader aware that opium sometimes overpowers Jasper, who is therefore not always in complete control of his faculties.

When she tells Jasper that in her fancy she often does things she contemplates doing in actuality, her client says: " Just like me ! I did it over and over again. I have done it hundreds of thousands of times in this room." After more probing from the woman, he discloses still more about the " murder " of his nephew:

> " Well; I have told you I did it here hundreds of thousands of times. What do I say ? I did it millions and billions of times. I did it so often, and through such vast expanses of time, that when it was really done, it seemed not worth the doing, it was done so soon." (Chapter XXIII.)

The scene continues as Jasper relives the pleasure he experiences when he thinks of the death of Edwin. The scene is important not only because it provides motivation for the opium woman, but because it tells us what effect opium has on Jasper. It suggests the possibility that it was only in his mind that he murdered Edwin, but the vision was so vivid that he thought that he had been successful.

The above scene is not the only one which reveals the power of the drug over Jasper. The very first paragraph of the book discloses that his mind is capable of the most dramatic and impossible visions when he is smoking opium. After his first trip to the cathedral crypt with Durdles, he comes back to the gatehouse, lights his opium pipe, and " delivers himself to the Spectres it invokes at midnight." (Chapter V.) It was at midnight that Edwin disappeared, never to return, according to the choirmaster's account to the authorities. Rosa is even aware of the choirmaster's moments of discomposure and abstraction:

> " Even when a glaze comes over them . . . and he seems to wander away into a frightful sort of dream in which he threatens most, he obliges me to know it, and to know that he is sitting close at my side, more terrible to me than ever." (Chapter VII.)

The second plot element, the ring, has already been discussed because of the part it plays in supporting the theory that Edwin is not murdered. Everyone agrees that it is to have an important part in the story. Those who are sure that Edwin is dead maintain that the ring is given so much attention because it will be used to identify the body lying in the quicklime; they assume that Dickens believed with Durdles and Jasper that quicklime would destroy all organic materials. The ring, they say, would either be found with the body or be used as a snare to force Jasper to reveal the burial spot; in his anxiety to secure the ring and thus remove it

as a piece of evidence against him, he would lead the others to the remains of Edwin. If we do not accept the theory that Edwin is dead, we can suppose that Jasper, fearing the ring might implicate him in the crime he thinks he has committed, would go to the spot where he believes the body to be. The ring fits either theory. What is necessary is that Jasper *think* that Edwin is dead and that the ring is with the body.

Similarly everyone in the story, with the probable exception of Mr. Grewgious, thinks that Edwin is dead. The dramatic possibilities arising from such a belief would have provided Dickens with material he could have exploited in characteristic fashion. Edwin's reappearance would pleasantly surprise both his friends in the novel and the readers. Jasper's rôle would not be affected. Nothing dramatically would be lost, and much would be gained.

(To be continued).

NOVELS OF THE EIGHTEEN-FORTIES

Pansy Pakenham

WHICH are the four English novels most typical of the eighteen-forties? Mrs. Tillotson[1] has chosen *Dombey and Son*, *Mary Barton*, *Vanity Fair* and *Jane Eyre*, but before she discusses these works individually she examines the ideas and events which inspired the novels of this decade and which distinguish them from earlier and later specimens of nineteenth-century fiction.

Enthusiasts for Dickens and his contemporaries will find their enjoyment of old favourites refreshed and deepened, by discovering the point of view of their first readers and critics, and may be surprised to learn how much new ground the novelists of the eighteen-forties explored. It was in this period that prose fiction became the predominant form of imaginative literature, no longer considered frivolous or immoral, but capable of dealing with all the important aspects of life and thought. There was a reaction from the " Silver Fork " and " Newgate " novels of the 'twenties and 'thirties, and Dickens had already found an audience for topical and popular themes. The dramatic preaching of Carlyle on the industrial and social conflicts of the time and his vivid, symbolical imagery had inspired and influenced a whole generation of writers. Another source of inspiration (which Mrs. Tillotson does not mention) particularly rich for Dickens, was the drama, above all Shakespearian tragedy as performed by Macready. The deep sentiment of gratitude to Macready frequently expressed by Dickens, shows how much he felt indebted to the great actor for imaginative nourishment. Of more recent literary influences on the development of the novel, Mrs. Tillotson emphasises the importance of Scott, not for his introduction of historical fiction, which only led to mediocre imitations, but for his showing the possibilities of regional backgrounds and manners, and for investing characters set in poverty and lowly occupations with a dignity and eloquence of their own.

[1] *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties*, by Kathleen Tillotson. Geoffrey Cumberlege, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 21s.

With a fresh interest in the external world, in political, industrial and social conflicts, in the morals and customs of different classes and districts, went a fresh interest in the hidden depths of the individual. The psychology of children, that dark continent, was opened up by Dickens and Charlotte Brontë and equally obscure regions were explored among the uneducated, the repressed and the solitary.

Readers who associate the early Victorians with prudery and timidity will have to revise their opinions when they consider what original and provocative books were best sellers in the eighteen-forties. The novelists were creating a public, and they could form taste instead of following it. Publication in monthly parts, initiated by Dickens and copied by Thackeray and others, helped to keep authors in touch with their readers and popularised the novel in general, by lowering and spreading the cost of book-buying.

Mrs. Tillotson denies that this method of publication necessarily spoiled the unity of a novel's design. Rather, it was often improved by the careful planning entailed for each number, and the elimination of dead wood and tedious discusions in a limited space. This is particularly noticeable in *Dombey and Son*, the novel she chooses to represent Dickens in this decade, as the most contemporary in its theme, though, unlike *Vanity Fair*, *Mary Barton* and *Jane Eyre*, it was not its author's first success. Owing to Dickens's absence abroad during its early stages, an outline of the plot was sent to Forster, and this, combined with the number plans and letters written while work was in progress, enables us to trace its design more clearly than with any of his other books. It is not nowadays a general favourite among Dickens's works, but Mrs. Tillotson's sympathetic study and intelligent criticism should greatly increase appreciation of it by future readers. The same can be said of the other novels she has selected, all of which gain in stature when studied in their contemporary setting and when their author's purposes are treated with respect. It is, however, doubtful whether Thackeray possessed the moral seriousness she attributes to him, and possible that his ambiguous treatment of his subjects expressed a teasing ambiguity in his own feelings, rather than a reforming ardour. Charlotte Brontë thought of him as an eagle till she met him, when she found him disappointingly frivolous. Nevertheless *Vanity Fair* is a brilliant *tour de force*, an epic of the sordid and trivial, which has never been surpassed or even imitated by later writers. It remains a solitary example of the sensibilities of the eighteen-forties applied to the brutal energies of Regency Society.

Jane Eyre needs no advertisement but Mrs. Tillotson adds to one's respect for Charlotte Brontë as a creative artist, while the study of *Mary Barton* should introduce new readers to Mrs. Gaskell's moving story of the Hungry 'Forties, who have hitherto only known her mellow aspects in *Cranford* and *Wives and Daughters*.

But whether dealing with major or minor novels, authors or critics, Mrs. Tillotson is always stimulating and her book cannot fail to interest anyone with a taste for novels—and not only of the eighteen-forties.

SHAVINGS FROM DICKENS'S WORKSHOP

Unpublished Fragments from the Novels

V. *BLEAK HOUSE*

IN the following pages will be found those passages of *Bleak House* deleted by the author in making up the monthly parts in which the novel appeared. They are taken from Dickens's original corrected proofs, and published for the first time by permission of the Victoria and Albert Museum. These passages from *Bleak House* complete the present series, as the cancelled passages of the corrected proofs of other novels of Dickens in the Victoria and Albert Museum are very few and lacking in general interest.—EDITOR.

CADDY IS "PRO-VOKED"

[Ch. V. On Esther's first morning in Thavies Inn, she was prepared to sally forth in Caddy's care, "anywhere." But "Anywhere's nowhere," said the sulky Caddy. "'Let us go somewhere at any rate,' said I."—]

"You needn't laugh, Miss Summerson; you wouldn't like it yourself; you call yourself very good tempered—"

"Really, I don't know, my dear," said I.

"You do. You know you do, Miss Summerson. Don't say you don't, you do!—I beg your pardon, I mean you *are*," she said, with quick and yet grudging, concession.

"Don't be angry with me, dear! I am so pro-voked!"

MUSINGS OF THE WARDS IN CHANCERY

[Ch. V. "'Ah, cousin, cousin, it's a weary word this Chancery!' 'It is to me, and has been ever since I can remember,' returned Ada,"—]

"... I am sure."

"To me too," said Rachel, thoughtfully.

"If the Lord Chancellor would decide against my interest as far as that is concerned, or at least would say I was only entitled to—how much could you and I live upon, Esther?" said Ada, blushing.

"No!" cried Richard, "he had better decide against me. I can go anywhere—go for a soldier if that's all, and never be missed. I would sell my best chance, if I could, on the shortest notice and the lowest terms."

"And go abroad?" said Ada.

"Yes!"

"India, perhaps?"

"Why yes, I think so," returned Richard.

Mr. Skimpole's Simplicity

[Ch. VI. Skimpole explains that he can enjoy Jarndyce's house without the responsibility of owning it, he can sympathise with Mrs. Jellyby's application to charity without emulating it, just as he can "float along an African river," in imagination, without, being there. "I don't know that it's of direct use my doing so, but it's all I can do, and I do it thoroughly."—]

There is a great breathing active principle, of desire to crush what is false and wrong, and to set up what is right and tender, which we recognise and admire by the name of Jarndyce! I can sympathise with that, in the same way.

Skimpole's Wants are but Few

[Ch. VI. "Now, my dear Miss Summerson, my dear Mr. Richard," . . . here you see me utterly incapable of helping myself, and entirely in your hands! I only ask to be free."—]

That's not much. I only ask to walk to-morrow morning among fallen leaves, and hear them rustle at my feet, instead of pacing across and across the parlour at our friend's Coavinses—however worthy Coavins may be; and I have no doubt that Coavins is a worthy man, and loves his children. Mine are inexpensive pleasures; it is not a costly pursuit to walk among the fallen leaves, and hear them rustle, I ask no more!

Esther Awakes at Bleak House

[Ch. VIII. Dressing before daylight, Esther contemplates the massive tower of the old Abbey Church—"But so from rough outsides (I hope I have learnt), serene and gentle influences often proceed."—]

I was in such a flutter about my two bunches of keys that I had been dreaming for an hour before I got up, that the more I tried to open a variety of locks with them the more determined they were not to fit any. No dream could have been less prophetic.

Jarndyce on Mrs. Pardiggle

[Ch. VIII. "We said as little as we could to Mr. Jarndyce, but the wind changed directly."—]

"Excellent people you know," he said, beginning to walk about, "Mrs. Pardiggle, and all the rest of 'em. Excellent people! Do a deal of good, and mean to do a good deal more. But they want one pattern out of all varieties of Looms, they *must* be in extremes, they *will* knock in tin tacks with a sledge hammer, they make such a bustle and noise, and they are so confoundedly indefatigable! —O Lord, yes, I feel the wind all over me!"

Lady Dedlock's Sister

[Ch. XVIII. Lady Dedlock asks Jarndyce—"I think you knew my sister?" . . . "We went our several ways." . . . "It is to be regretted, I suppose, but it could not be helped."—]

". . . Did you know her afterwards?"

He shook his head.

"You never met her?"

"Never."

"You are, of course, aware that she is dead?"

"Yes," he said, "I heard of it some time ago. She lived so retired, that I heard of it by mere accident."

Esther's Opinion of Chancery

[Ch. XXIII. "I spoke to Richard with all the earnestness I felt, and all the hope I could not quite feel then: and implored him, for Ada's sake, not to put any trust in Chancery,"—]

, which no one trusted, and which was held in universal dread, contempt, and horror; I entreated him to regard it as something so flagrant and bad, that nothing short of a miracle could bring any good out of it to any one.

Richard prepares to Leave for London

[Ch. XXXVII. Richard decides to go to town immediately on being told by Vholes, his new legal adviser, that Jarndyce and Jarndyce is down for hearing again the next morning. Esther writes that "We made it as plain as politely could that we should leave Mr. Skimpole to the Dedlock Arms, and return when the night travellers were gone."—]

. . . We were both surprised, on our rising to accompany Richard to the little inn, that he rather objected to our going.

"Why the fact is," he at length explained, with a hearty burst of laughter—"it's very ridiculous but since it must come out,—there's nothing kept here; there was nothing to be got, but a mourning-coach that happens to be waiting to be taken back; and I am going to drive Mr. Vholes over in that."

Ada turned pale, and was quite shocked. I must say that I too felt uncomfortable and was not relieved by the great applicability of the carriage to Mr. Vholes.

Mrs. Rouncewell Comforts Her Stricken Master

[Ch. LVIII. Sir Leicester Dedlock is waiting through the night for his wife's return. His "old housekeeper is the first to understand that he is striving to uphold the fiction with himself that it is not growing late."—]

"George," she whispers softly, when Volumnia has gone down to dinner, "Sir Leicester don't like the thought of shutting out

my Lady for another night. So away for a little while, my dear. I'll speak to him."

The trooper retires, and Mrs. Rouncewell takes her chair at the bedside.

" Sir Leicester."

" That's Mrs. Rouncewell ? "

" Surely, yes, Sir Leicester."

" I was afraid you had left me."

His hand is lying close beside her. She kisses it.

" It's the dull one," says Sir Leicester. " But I feel that Mrs. Rouncewell."

It is too dark to see him; she thinks, however, that he puts his other hand before his eyes !

" Where is your son, George ? He is not gone ? I want him here. I want only you and him; I would rather have no one else to-night."

" He hoped he might be of some use, and he is not gone, Sir Leicester."

" I thank him ! "

It is interesting to note that in the famous last paragraph relating to the death of Jo, at the end of Ch. XLVII, Dickens originally wrote of pity, as well as of compassion. Before the deletion of the former word, the passage read:

Dead, your Majesty. Dead, my lords and gentlemen. Dead, Right Reverends and Wrong Reverends of every order. Dead, men and women, born with Heavenly pity and compassion in your hearts. And dying thus around us every day.

(*Concluded*)

BRANCH SECRETARIES

The congratulations and thanks of the Dickens Fellowship are offered respectively to the following newly elected and retiring Secretaries: Mr. Harry Toye, who succeeds Mr. B. C. E. Osman at Southend; Mr. Lamb, who succeeds Miss D. W. Hendy at Lytham St. Annes; Miss G. Lawson, who succeeds Mr. Barnes (deceased) at Adelaide; Mrs. G. M. Williams, who succeeds Mrs. J. Naas (deceased) at East Bay, Cal., and Mrs. Thos. Earle, Jnr., who succeeds Mrs. E. S. Colton at Worcester, Mass.

Congratulations to Mr. Norman Stouppe who has been elected President, and Miss M. M. Musgrove, a Life Member of the Christchurch Branch.

A hearty welcome to England is extended to Mr. Hedley Hepworth and Mrs. P. Burrows of Chicago, Miss B. Doig and Mrs. Treseder of Brisbane, Miss E. E. White of Adelaide, and Mr. L. Perker of Toronto.

OBITUARY

London deeply regrets to announce the death, in July, of Mr. J. H. McNulty, who was a valued contributor to this magazine for more than thirty years, during which period his literary ability and vein of fantasy proved invaluable. He was no less successful in debate as he demonstrated in the happiest fashion after many Fellowship lectures. For some years he edited *The Old Lady of Threadneedle Street*, the journal of The Bank of England, and was for long a prominent member of the Cogers, the famous debating club.

The death is also announced of Mrs. Phillips and Mr. Reginald Temple, of Headquarters, Miss Cole of Rochester, Mr. J. R. Dear and Mrs. E. E. Baker of Eastbourne, Mr. C. T. Barnes, and Mr. N. Brock of Adelaide, and Mrs. Mawdsley, Mr. J. W. Clough, and Mr. Charles Nowell of Manchester.

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

Brief contributions are invited for this page. (*Press cuttings unacceptable*).

Bath

The Branch has had another successful session. Interest in the Society's work has continued unabated, and new members have been enrolled. Meetings have been devoted mainly to readings from *Dombey and Son*. Other events included social evenings and whist drives. The Annual Birthday Dinner was held at the Red House on February 6th, when the toast of "The Immortal Memory" was proposed by the Spa Director, Mr. J. E. Boddington. In the morning, the ceremony of laying a wreath on the bust of Dickens in the Pump Room was performed by the Mayor, Major Adrian Hopkins. A very pleasant summer outing was arranged by the Treasurer, Mr. F. Mills. This comprised a visit to Stourhead and King Alfred's Tower, where Mr. F. W. G. Thomas gave a talk on their historical associations. The session concluded with a paper, entitled "Charles Lamb and Charles Dickens," by Mr. F. C. Dance. Mr. Brian Dawes was elected as President in succession to Mrs. Twort. F.W.G.T.

Melbourne

The Melbourne Fellowship opened its 1954 season with the usual commemoration of Dickens's Birthday. This took the form of a Supper Party at the Wentworth Café, where about 150 members and friends met to do honour to the novelist. The toast to "The Immortal Memory" was proposed by the President, Mr. F. C. Sides, and interesting speeches were given by Mr. C. A. McCallum, Chief Librarian of the city, and Mr. Vance Palmer, the well-known Australian author and critic. Musical items and Dickens recitals added further enjoyment. This year Melbourne Branch celebrates its 50th year and in August we are commemorating our jubilee with special functions. In November we were pleased to welcome Miss Young, from the Hull Branch. Our members, who were holidaying abroad, returned with glowing accounts of the Fellowship meetings they had attended in England, and we would wish to express our thanks to all Dickensians who so kindly entertained them and gave them such a wonderful time. The Melbourne Branch will always be pleased to extend a warm welcome to fellow Dickensians from abroad. V.Mc.M.

Wolverhampton

A varied and enjoyable season has been enjoyed. New members have been enrolled and a new Chairman initiated and assisting in his duties by his predecessor. The new Dramatic Group got off to a good start with scenes from Dickens, welcome visits were paid by Miss Ruth Whittaker, and Mrs. Jane Bacon, from London, both of whom gave evenings that were voted great successes, as were the recitals from *David Copperfield*, by Mr. Williams, and from *Bleak House*, by Mr. Underwood of Birmingham. There were very popular readings from *Oliver Twist*, a candle-lit supper on Dickens's Birthday, and a summer excursion to Chatsworth, all of which were completely successful. G.W.